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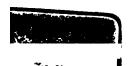
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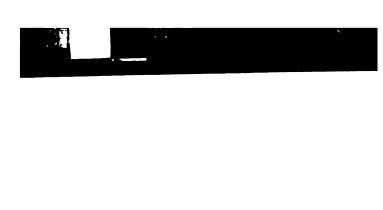
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# JANE LOMAX;

OR

# A MOTHER'S CRIME.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE,"

"REUBEN APSLEY," &c.

That I have run, and still pursue, these ways,
That bale down curses on me?"

Massinger.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

IONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1838.

452.



#### LONDON:

F. SHOEERL, JUN., LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

### PREFACE.

When the reader learns that the following Tale was written three or four years ago, about which period the rage for what are termed Fashionable Novels had reached its culminating point, he may, perhaps, be surprised to find that its scenes are mostly laid in the unromantic purlieus of Bermondsey and Shad-Thames, and that its characters are entirely chosen from a class which has not been deemed either high enough or low enough to figure in our recent works of fiction. In the generality of these compositions, many of them evincing

the highest order of talent, the prominent personages bear sounding titles, maintain large establishments, and move only in the quarters consecrated to our aristocracy; the other actors in the drama being taken from inferior, not to say low, life, and rendered as vulgar and ridiculous as possible, that they may act as foils to their superiors.

Writers of this school, forgetting that there is an innate vulgarity, quite independent of external observances and forms, and quite as likely, therefore, to be encountered among the peerage as the peasantry, have confined it to certain conventional phrases, personal peculiarities, and domestic usages. Even if this narrow view be not opposed to Nature and to truth, it can hardly be denied that it has a mischievous tendency to widen the breach, where too great a severance and alienation of classes already forms the besetting sin of our social system.

As the passions of our common nature are equally irrespective of birth and locality, the middling ranks and those immediately beneath them, however unclassical may be their avocacations and abodes, surely present not less available materials to the Novelist, than the virtues and the vices of the higher orders. We have tragedies, such as the Gamester, George Barnwell, and others, where the pathos of the scene seems to be rendered more thrilling, and to come more immediately home to our business and bosoms, because the characters are taken from among the less elevated classes of society. The Germans and the French have novels exclusively illustrative of the manners of the people; and they who have read the works of MICHAEL RAYMOND, or even the single most affecting tale of "Le Maçon," must admit that the adventures of artisans and shopkeepers are not less susceptible of deep. interest than the woes of coronetted grandeur With these examples and encouragements, the Author has attempted a Tale, of which the scene is principally laid in those plebeian purlieus to which he has already referred, the characters being chosen from that proscribed, or at least neglected sphere, the lower grades of middling life. He has not avoided the delineation of individual vulgarity, but he has not made it the characteristic of a class; while he has ventured to introduce instances of refinement and dignified feeling among his unfashionables, because he cannot find in real life any warrant for the doctrine that the less noble are, in the aggregate, more ignoble than others.

The writer is fully aware that he labours under the disadvantage of combating long-established associations, and he feels himself, therefore, justified in making an especial appeal to the indulgence of the reader. If he succeed in interesting and amusing, his experiment will



.

## JANE LOMAX.

#### CHAPTER I.

"I wish that it may not prove some ominous foretoken of misfortune to have met with such a miser."

Signar.

In one of the narrow back streets of Bristol, an expiring coke fire, winking and clicking in the old-fashioned grate of a shabby room, threw a dim gleam upon the surrounding Dutch tiles, stamped with rude figures of saints and martyrs; while the faint light emitted from a single unsnuffed candle, placed on a circular oaken table, gave an additional air of penury and vol. 1.

gloom to those portions of the apartment which its feeble ray was enabled to penetrate.

The mantel-shelf, lumbered with a confused assemblage of phials, pill-boxes, and gallipots, would have sufficiently revealed to any casual observer that he was in a sick chamber, which, however, exhibited none of the luxuries, or even comforts, usually provided for the accommodation of an invalid. Instead of a warm carpet, patches of cold well-worn oilcloth were nailed to the floor; neither sofa nor easy chair was to be seen; the scanty furniture was of the meanest description; and, although the tall dusky bed seemed by its wrought canopy, which touched the ceiling, to have once known better days, its tattered fringe and faded hangings betrayed that many a long year had elapsed since it had received any renovating touches from the upholsterer: while its disproportionate height and sombre hue, together with the blended ghastliness of the dim candle and

half-extinguished fire, which left a part of its outline in deep shade, imparted to it an almost spectral character, if we can imagine a piece of furniture to be susceptible of any such effect.

It looked like a death-bed, and such, indeed, it might be termed; for its knotted mattress was pressed at this moment by Diedrich Hoffman, an old German, labouring under a fatal malady, who for upwards of forty years had carried on the business of a sugar-baker in Bristol, where he had amassed a handsome fortune by the profits of his trade, and by penurious habits, of which the rigour might be inferred from the slight description we have given of his abode. Naturally averse to all change, and well knowing that no removal can be effected without expence, he had continued to occupy his present residence from his first arrival in the city, grudging even the trifling expenditure necessary to renew its furniture, or repair its dilapidations, so that it had gradually fallen into a very forlorn state.

And yet, notwithstanding these flagrant manifestations of a sordid spirit, Diedrich Hoffman could hardly be termed a miser. True, he denied himself almost every gratification that other men covet, but it was because he differed from their tastes, and found more pleasure in foregoing than in enjoying the ordinary delights of the world. An habitual economist, a confirmed old bachelor, and something of a humourist, he would, nevertheless, occasionally perform a liberal or even a munificent action, without deviating in other respects from his customary parsimony. When subscriptions had been set on foot for public objects, his name had stood upon more than one occasion at the head of the list.

That he had not been impelled to these rare conquests over his niggardly disposition by the vanity of being reputed a rich man, we will and two children, on the sorry pittance which he earned as clerk to a law-stationer. man, by name Joel Lomax, had in the course of a few months so far recommended himself by his assiduity and integrity, that Hoffman not only made a considerable addition to the salary he had agreed to give him, but proposed that his wife and children, whose manners and appearance he had found singularly prepossessing, should take up their abode in his house. To this offer he was probably incited by the irksomeness of solitude, and that sense of his growing infirmities to which we have already alluded: but, whatever might have been his motives, the proposition was too beneficial to its object not to be eagerly and gratefully accepted.

Incessant were the whisperings and tattlings, and manifold the surmises, to which this unprecedented act of kindness gave rise; but, when Hoffman ordered additional furniture for when they adverted to his advanced age and waning health, which intimated no very remote termination to his life. They thought it not impossible that so singular and self-willed a character might even make his new inmate his heir, under which impression several, who had previously refused to notice the poverty-stricken clerk, now courted his society, reminding him that his benefactor had only one known relation in the world, a nephew, whom he had disinherited for having made an imprudent marriage with a strolling actress.

They urged Lomax, therefore, to ingratiate himself by every possible means with the old man, in the hope of succeeding to his property, or, at all events, of obtaining a handsome legacy, should he have left the bulk of his fortune, as was generally anticipated, to his partner and fellow-countryman, Mr. Vandermeulen. Instead of lending himself to the golden and aspiring thoughts which such sug-

gestions were calculated to awaken, the humble clerk, whose every hope seemed to have been crushed by long suffering and disappointment, repressed them as foolish and presumptuous dreams, to which it did not become him to listen, protesting that he had already received more favours from his benefactor than he should ever be enabled to requite. Cautious professions of this nature had been counselled by his wife, a woman whose shrewd, subtle, and powerful mind had obtained a complete ascendency over the faculties of her weak and spirit-broken husband. With this brief prelude of explanation we return to the sick chamber.

Silence had reigned in it for some time, only interrupted by the occasional breathings of the slumbering invalid, and the regular ticking of a ponderous German watch suspended over the wooden mantel-shelf; when, from that side of the bed which was veiled in deep shade, Joel Lomax, the sick man's clerk, advanced

noiselessly towards the table in the centre of the room.

He was a tall, gaunt, stooping figure, apparently about sixty years of age, attired in a shabby suit of black, his deeply-furrowed cheeks and haggard countenance betraying long-endured cares and sorrows, with which, to judge by the cowed look of his eye, and the peculiar expression of imbecility about his mouth, he was but little qualified to struggle. After having snuffed the candle, he looked at the watch, and, taking two or three lumps of coke from a wooden box, dropped them softly on the fire, an operation, however, which he could not accomplish without making a noise that awoke the dozing patient.

"Fot is de madder?" asked Hoffman, who, from his having associated almost exclusively with his own countrymen in England, had never been able to shake off his German accent. "Is dat you, Lomax? Vhy don't you gome

de Brice Gurrent, de sales by auction, or de Gustom House entries and exborts, fot I dake a delight to hear! Bote your boor boy Benjamin is doo delicate vor a sick room. He vainted away fain I was blooded. Don't let him gome do me no more—I don't like do see people vaint away: it botes me in mind of death."

"That dear boy has always been a delicate plant, and, even now, I sometimes doubt whether we shall rear him, a fear that makes me very unhappy."

"Bah! Dat is only begause you are afraid to lose your happiness fot he gibs you now. Ah! mine goot vriend! you have, besides, got a wife and a daughter what loafs you, and what can sid by your side and nurse you fain you get old and lose your brecious helt; and I am aged and sick, and have got nobody fot loafs me. I begin do dink dat an old paitchelor is a melancholy ding to live, and a still more

bainful ding to die; and fain I ged aboud againvhich I drust will be soon, for I veel bedder, moch bedder do-night — I shall lose no time, bote look about me vor a zootable wife."

Grave as was the temperament of Lomax, he could hardly refrain from smiling, when he coupled this strange declaration with the advanced years, as well as the doubtful state, of the speaker, whose malady was of a much more perilous nature than he himself seemed to apprehend. His countenance, however, preserved its usual submissive dejected expression; he said nothing, and the sick man continued.

"I should like, mine goot Lomax, do ged oop do-morrow, and drive out a liddle way in a hackney goach, vor I dink de air would do me more goot dan all de dogtor's stuff, and wouldn't cost so moch. You and your wife and taughter shall go wid me, and we will drive upon de Clifton road; bote, fain we gome to de dumbpike, we will durn about, for I am ruined enough already wid de dogtor's fees. Have you pote down in de betty gash boke how much you pay vor all dis robbery of mine burse?"

"I believe, sir, that Mrs. Lomax has entered every thing."

"Ah! she is a goot woman of business, and would have made a gabital boke-keeper. It is a gomfort when a man knows he will nod be blundered and robed by de beople aboud him."

Their colloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Vandermeulen, the patient's partner, a calculating, long-sighted, moneygrasping man, who took no small interest in the health of his friend, since he verily believed himself to have been named his sole heir, an object which for many years past, and by a great variety of manœuvres, he had been seeking to accomplish.

Insiduously encouraging Hoffman's nephew to make an imprudent marriage, by assurances that his uncle's anger would be transient, and that a reconciliation would speedily be effected, although he knew the old man to be stubborn and almost inexorable, when once offended, he subsequently sought every opportunity to widen the breach between them, and his machinations finally succeeded.

With true German phlegm, Hoffman burnt, on the morning of his nephew's marriage, a will which he had made in his favour, merely exclaiming, as he tossed it into the fire, "Fain I leave mine broberty, it shall be to a man of goot jodgement, and nod to a jagass."

A few months afterwards, as he was on the point of visiting Cheltenham in the hope of re-establishing his health, he took his partner aside, and putting the draught of a fresh will into his hands, desired him to look it over, and let him know what he thought of it. By this

instrument he proposed leaving his whole fortune to his godson, Diedrich, Vandermeulen's eldest boy. Blinded by cupidity, the father, instead of expressing a becoming gratitude for this intended act of munificence, was indiscreet enough to betray a feeling of disappointment, suggesting that to make young men independent of their parents was a proceeding fraught with danger, and insinuating that it would be a much better arrangement were the money left to himself in the first instance. "I dought I should have bleased you," muttered the old man, "bote berhaps you are right, berhaps you are right." With these words he took back the paper, hobbled to his own room, and immediately committed it to the flames, repeatedly exclaiming, "Fain I leave mine broberty, it shall nod be to de son of a jagass, and still less to de old jagass himself."

On the following morning he proceeded to Cheltenham, during his visit to which place, either mollified by the sense of his waning health, or touched by some other compunctious visiting of nature, he caused a new will to be prepared, in which he once more bequeathed his entire fortune to his nephew, Edward Ruddock. This instrument, however, he did not execute, but brought it back with him to Bristol, sharing the common superstitious notion that to sign a last will and testament is like despatching a card of invitation to Death.

Although Mr. Vandermeulen, firmly believing his suggestion to have been adopted, was prepared to meet the demise of his partner, and to succeed to his property with a truly christian resignation; he was anxious, for the sake of appearances, that nothing should be omitted which might seem calculated to prolong his life. During his illness he had been indefatigable in his attentions; and the object of his present visit was to apprise the patient that, having felt it his duty to call in additional ad-

vice, a consultation of physicians would be held in the course of the next half hour. Feeble as he was, the choleric old German started up in his bed at this announcement, eructating oaths in his native tongue, and bestowing no very measured abuse upon his partner for subjecting him to such an additional expence, until he happened to recollect how completely the offender had outwitted himself in the affair of the will, when he became suddenly pacified, muttering with an inward chuckle and a ghastly grin: - "Goot! goot! I have gaught him in his own trap. Diedrich Hoffman is not to be gajoled nor bambooshled. Well, well, led 'em gome, led 'em gome. I shall ged well in spite of all de dogtors and aboaticaries. I am bedder, moch bedder."

An apothecary and physician had already been in attendance: one of the most eminent of the faculty then practising in Bristol, (we are speaking of the close of the last century) his brother practitioner, "with an account of some despatches from the Mediterranean. It is reported that Nelson, having obtained a certain clue to the French fleet, has returned to the coast of Egypt."

"Ay, but it may be too late, now. I always said that he should never have left it," observed the first speaker, who was a keen politician.

"May I presume, Dr. H——, that you approve of what has been done?" inquired the apothecary, anxious that the leading practitioner should sanction his treatment of the sick man.

"Not at all, sir, not at all; quite the reverse. He should not have quitted Alexandria; for the French fleet, he might be well assured, could never remain long separated from the army."

"You mistake me, Doctor; I was speaking of our patient."

"How could I dream of that, sir? I pre-

sumed, of course, that you were alluding to Nelson. Any other news stirring?"

"None but what I presume you must have beard, the failure this morning of the house of Phillpotts and Patterson, an unlucky affair for me, for I lately attended Mr. Patterson's family of seven children, in measles and scarlatina, and I apprehend, from what I hear, that I must now be contented with a small dividend on my bill."

"You will be nothing out of pocket," said the physician, with a quiet smile.

"Nay, Doctor, you are not to suppose that our business, like your's, is all profit."

"True, true: I had forgotten the phials and pill-boxes. Sailed back again for the coast of Egypt, has he? He will miss them, mark my words. I am seldom wrong; he will miss them a second time."

"With regard to our patient," resumed the apothecary.

"I cannot quite agree with you," said the second practitioner, addressing himself to the first. "Nelson is a lucky man, or, in other words, a skilful and persevering commander. Depend upon it he will yet give a good account of the enemy."

Snuff-boxes were now produced, the fire was again stirred, and the medical politicians, who had totally forgotten the ostensible object of their meeting, entered into an animated discussion, which lasted several minutes, as to the probabilities of an engagement between the hostile fleets.

Availing himself of a momentary pause, the apothecary ventured to repeat:—"I hope, Dr. H.—, that you approve of what I have done. May I ask what you consider to be our patient's particular and immediate complaint?"

"Old age; a disease that we have little chance of palliating, since one day adds more to it than twenty physicians can take from it."

- "I am proud to find, Doctor, that your opinion coincides with mine. I saw from the first that it was an utterly hopeless case."
- "If you were aware that professional advice was of no earthly use, I wonder you did not call me in sooner," said the second Esculapean, in a tone of reproach.
- "I should have done so, Doctor, as usual in all such cases, but that my patient, who is as obstinate as a mule, would not consent to it."
- "Upon such emergencies you should be imperative. We must not let a rich man slip out of the world without paying the customary tolls. In two or three days, although nature has rallied for the moment, he will no longer be a subject for any fees but those of the clergyman and undertaker."
- "As all further consultations, then, are manifestly useless," resumed the apothecary, "we had better make up for lost time, and arrange

to meet twice a day, until we receive a mortuary dismissal."

"You are a man of business," said Dr. H—, with his accustomed tranquil smile. "From a rich, childless, penurious patient, like Diedrich Hoffman, I never decline a fee, in order that I may be enabled to refuse it when tendered by those who can less afford its disbursement."

"The first half of your example," said the second doctor, "is worthy of all imitation; but the latter clause must be executed with great discretion."

"I presume you will think it necessary to prescribe," hesitated the apothecary, pushing forward the pens and paper. "It is of little use, however, for my wrong-headed patient will no longer take any of my medicines."

"In that case," smiled Dr. H——, "he cannot possibly object if we order all the doses to be doubled. What say you, brother?"

"Nothing can be more reasonable; and I will write accordingly."

A couple of illegible lines having been scribbled in Latin and duly signed, the sons of Galen, apparently not much exhausted by their deep and anxious deliberation, were about to quit the apartment, when the apothecary observed that the patient, so far from being aware of his rapidly-approaching dissolution, flattered himself with the hope that he was recovering, and would shortly be enabled to return to business. "How would you have me act," he continued, addressing himself to Dr. H——, "as to communicating to him his real situation? What is your own rule upon such occasions?"

"That depends upon circumstances. Where I have reason to believe that the patient has settled all his worldly affairs, a fact which it is generally easy to ascertain from some of the family, I am anxious to leave him all the con-

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solations of hope, not only as it may smooth the path of death, if his complaint be incurable, but because I believe it possible that he may invigorate the vital principle by clinging with a confident tenacity to life. No one who knows what a mysterious, I had almost said a miraculous influence the mind sometimes exercises upon the body, will be surprised at this assertion. For the same reason, and especially in nervous cases, the very fear of death will often accelerate the death we fear; so that I hold it safer, as well as more humane, to soothe the bed of sickness by a delusion, which is certainly gratifying and may be salutary, than to agitate it by a truth which is sure to be painful and may be mischievous."

"I differ from you," said the second practitioner. "Your premises may be good, as far as they go, but you have omitted to advert to higher and more imperative considerations. The claims of religion supersede all others, and I cannot suffer a fellow-creature to go out of the world without giving him an opportunity of making his peace with Heaven. My conscience will not suffer it."

"It is the same conscience, nevertheless," said Dr. H-, with a touch of irony in his smile, "which allows you to take fees from him twice a day, after you know his case to be hopeless. For my own part, I freely confess that I place no great faith in the efficacy of death-bed repentances. I doubt whether the eye of Omniscience can be so easily hoodwinked; whether the Deity can be propitiated by our pring him the devil's leavings; by our professing virtue was can no longer practise sin; by our disowning his authority so long as disobedience flattered our evil passions and tardily and meanly crying out for quarter, not so much from a change of principle as of circumstances not from the love of religion or of heaven, so much as from the selfish fear of a punishment which we braved until it became imminent. A living penitence, depend upon it, is ten thousand times better than a dying one."

"But, I believe," said the apothecary, "that Mr. Hoffman has never executed his will, although I am pretty confident that he has prepared one."

"In that case, my objections vanish; and, for the sake of the living, he had better be immediately informed that he is dying. He cannot possibly hold out more than ——. Hah! I hear the horns again! I must positively have a peep at the paper. Nelson will miss the French fleet. I have said it, and I repeat it."

Vandermeulen and Lomax were now summoned into the chamber, to receive the report of this long and arduous deliberation, as well as to pay the fees; when the diploma'd Esculapians, after appointing to meet again on the

following morning, took their departure, and the apothecary, for Vandermeulen declined that perilous office, returned to the sick room, to communicate to the patient the probability of his dissolution in the course of a few days. 30

JANE LOMAX.

## CHAPTER II.

"Here I acknowledge thee
My hope—the only jewel of my life—
The best of children—dearer than my breath—
A happiness as high as I could think:
And when my actions call thee otherwise,
Perdition light upon me!"

A KING AND NO KING.

HAVING had several opportunities of witnessing the unmanageable disposition of his patient, the bearer of these alarming tidings was not without apprehensions as to the effect they might produce; but Hoffman received them with no other change of countenance than a grin of incredulous scorn, as he exclaimed, "My gomblemends to yourself and de dogtors, and you are all liars and jagasses! Mine own jodgement is bedder dan your's, and

I feel dat I shall not be bote under de grass distime, unless dere is a gonspiracy to gill me. I tell you I am bedder, moch bedder, ever since I left off daking your nasty drogs and rubbish."

"I am merely," resumed the apothecary, "giving you our unanimous and conscientious opinion, and, such being our conviction, I feel it my duty to inquire whether you wish to have any spiritual advice."

"I wish for noding what is to gost money."

"We will find a clergyman who shall attend you gratuitously."

"Den I won't see him, for none bote a jagass would give me his advice for noding, dat is, if it were wort having."

"It is my further duty to remind you that you have no time to lose, if you have not yet prepared your will."

"It is brebared, bote nod egsecuted. Hah! dat is a goot thought! a goot thought! If

you gill me among you, I must dake gare dat you do not plunder me too. Where is Joel Lomax?"

"I am here, sir," said the clerk, who had just entered the apartment.

"Lomax, give me mine drowsers: hah! dis is de key of de oken gabinet in your ped-room; onlock it, and you shall find on de dop shelf, behind a bundle of rags, a baper wrapped oop in a biece of old black gloth; bring it to me widout ondying it."

His directions were obeyed; when he unfolded the cloth, and, taking out a paper, said, "Hah! dis is de will; I will read it over do-night, and it shall be egsecuted do-morrow, fain de physicians gome to veel my pulse and bick mine pocket." At the mention of the word will, his partner, who had been listening at the door, made his appearance, eagerly tendering his services in whatever way they could be rendered available. "Dank you, dank you

gindly, Vandermeulen," said the patient with a sardonic grin, "you were goot enough to give me a hint about mine will some dime ago, and you will find I have not forgotten it. For de bresent I will not drouble you, nor any von else; bote, if you will all leave mine room, I will dry and get some sleep." So saying, he thrust the will under his pillow and composed himself for slumber, when his visitants withdrew; and Lomax, who had passed the previous night in the sick room, despatched his wife to occupy a chair by the bedside of the invalid.

Ungovernable passions, humble station, and a considerable share of personal beauty, all fearful temptations to an ill-educated female, had occasioned Mrs. Lomax, at a very early age, to plunge into evil courses, over which we shall charitably drop a veil. A vigorous, penetrative mind, and a suppressed, but not extinguished, sense of rectitude, quickly enabling her to discern the errors of the course she was

coon, she sought cagerly for some mean covering the station she had forfeited, ject which could only be effected by a decurriage.

Most females similarly circumstanced wo re been deterred by the difficulties of such dertaking; but, to a mind like her's, impents were incentives, while her sharp discustion soon found a fitting object on who might exercise her wiles. Joel Loman engaged in a thriving trade, was respece, amorous, and weak. Her blandishment beauty, and that almost irresistible fascion which a strong decided mind can exercise one that is feeble and irresolute, quick omplished all the rest. In three months

inappreciable value of character from the deeplyfelt humiliation of its loss, she conducted herself so irreproachably in her new neighbourhood, where her previous history was unknown,
that she won universal respect. Too quick
and apprehensive not to perceive the deficiencies
in her education, she secretly and assiduously
commenced a course of self-instruction, a task
which soon enabled a vigorous intellect like
her's to take its station rather above than
below the level of the sphere in which she was
now moving.

From this late, though diligent and successful, cultivation of her talents, she derived no small advantage in after-years, since it qualified her to assist in the education of her children, under a reverse of fortune, which all her exertions and abilities, for she was her husband's chief counsellor and director, even in the affairs of business, had been unable to ward off.

In the struggles that ensued, and during the

late years of penury, when Lomax had supported himself and family on the pitiful salary of a law-stationer's clerk, she had endured every thing without uttering a single complaint as to her own lot, although she would occasionally, and even sharply, reproach her husband for his prostration of spirits and total want of manly fortitude. Her own composure, however, did not proceed from resignation, so much as from that proud resistance to calamity which is ever offered by a high and intrepid spirit. Knowing the enmity of fortune to have been unprovoked by any extravagance or indiscretion, an indignant sense of its injustice enabled her to endure it, not only without repining, but with a feeling of defiance that was much more consonant to her courageous soul than a cowering submission.

By that benevolent provision of nature which generally concentrates the parental, or at least the maternal, affections upon whichever object,

from its physical or mental imperfections, has the most need of incessant watchfulness and love, the strong passions of Mrs. Lomax. which for so many years had been kept in restraint, vented themselves in an unmeasured and ungovernable fondness for her only son Benjamin, an amiable and beautiful, but sickly, youth, whom they had reared with the greatest difficulty, and upon whom the mother doated with a redoubled devotion every time that she snatched him, as it were, from the jaws of death. Upon each of these occasions, she felt as if he had been born again to her; and thus the affection, which would have sufficed for several children, became concentrated upon one. A blind and excessive attachment of this nature not seldom punishes itself by spoiling its object; but her son was of so happy a nature, so affectionate, so right-principled, so amiable, that he remained unperverted, even by overindulgence, and in some degree justified the

erted to the precarious state of this cher that her resolute heart ever sank w

Iad a stranger casually fixed his eyes

1. Lomax, as she entered the sick roon
1. Lomax, as she

eye, and resolute brow, that she possessed a mind capable of almost any enterprise, when its latent energies should be called into action.

No sooner had she taken her station by the bed-side, than the sick man, rousing from his feigned slumber, said in a whisper, "Dat is you, mine goot Mrs. Lomax — I know your voodsteb; is dere nobody else in de room?" An answer was given in the negative. "Den lock de door," he continued, "and bring me de gandle."

She did as she was directed, and Hoffman, fumbling under his pillow and drawing out the will, attempted to read it, but his eye-sight, which had been latterly failing him, was now so defective that he could not succeed, and he handed it over to Mrs. Lomax, saying, with a groan, "De gursed dogtor's stuff has quite spoiled mine eye-sight, so read it to me, read it to me, mine goot voman, but bromise me you will not tell de condends to nobody, bromise

me as you are a goot Christian, and fain you read, do not speak doo loud."

She gave the required pledge, and proceeded to read the will, which was very short, the whole of his property being devised, as we have already stated, to his nephew, Edward Ruddock.

"Very goot, very goot," he exclaimed when she had concluded; "bot der is a liddle godicil what you will like; read it, read it."

By this addition, which seemed to have been recently made, and was all in his own handwriting, he bequeathed a legacy of two hundred pounds to his faithful clerk, Joel Lomax, who was also appointed one of his executors. The wife expressed her warmest gratitude for this unexpected remembrance, and the sick man, muttering, "Goot, goot, dis will make you gomfordable in your old age — I will egsecute it do-morrow," again thrust the will under his pillow and composed himself to sleep.

How rapidly, how instantaneously, may our evil angel, or rather our own vicious propensities, even after a long course of unimpeachable conduct, suggest to us a deed of which the execution shall totally alter the whole future course of our life! So far from being inspired with gratitude for the legacy bequeathed to her husband, the first thought that entered the fermenting brain of Mrs. Lomax was the possibility of obtaining the whole of the dying man's large fortune! Nobody, it is said, knows the weak side of his intended victims so well as the devil; nobody so clever and discerning in the disguises he assumes for the purpose of effecting his object. That with which he invested himself when tempting Mrs. Lomax wore the semblance of maternal affection.

"I care not for myself," she mentally ejaculated. "In all our struggles and hardships I have disdained to utter a single complaint; my husband is now inured to toil and penury,

and his spirit is bowed down to his humble station; our daughter Mary has youth, health, beauty, and accomplishments, with which she can hardly fail to make her way in life; but my poor, dear boy is sickly, sensitive, and conscientious, with a mind as delicate as his frame, and both totally unfitted for wresting his subsistence from a hard and unpitying world, which sometimes suffers even the bold, the robust, and the unscrupulous, to perish of want. Benjamin, my darling Benjamin! thy father's health is already undermined, mine begins to evince symptoms of decay; we are neither of us young, and what is to become of thee when we are called away, and leave thee to the buffetings of the storm, without rudder or compass, without a friend, and without a guinea? I cannot bear to think of it. Away, away, thou hideous vision! I should be the most unnatural of mothers did I not do all in my power to save my boy from such a miserable fate, and surely

Heaven itself will look down with indulgence upon a pious fraud, which emanates from the fond feelings of a mother, and has no other object than to protect her helpless son, when he becomes an orphan, from pauperism and anguish!"

When we are seeking to indulge a guilty wish, the mind becomes exceedingly quicksighted on one side of the question, while it is sometimes totally blind upon the other. Had not her judgment been thus warped, the penetrative Mrs. Lomax could hardly have deluded herself with the notion that she might defraud a real orphan, for such was Edward Ruddock, of his inheritance, for the sake of bestopping it upon a hypothetical orphan, who had no chier claims to it than delicate health, and an incapacity for the active employments of life. Still less could she have imagined that Heaven would sanction any such flagrant miquity. fact, the boundless and ungovernable affection

for her son, which was now agitating her whole frame with impetuous emotions, had not allowed her to weigh any thing but the possibility of aggrandizing him by forging a new will, a criminal scheme of which she had no sooner entertained the idea than her prompt and inventive faculties suggested the means of its accomplishment, without incurring, as she verily believed, the smallest risk, or even possibility, of detection.

As instant and undaunted in executing as she had been quick in conceiving this unprincipled fraud, she first ascertained that Hoffman was sound asleep, and then, gently introducing her arm under the pillow, drew out the will without disturbing him. Aware that she would require it during the whole night, should she succeed in her meditated object, her mind ran with the rapidity of lightning over the various contingencies that might arise during her absence from the sick room. Of these the most obvious

was the probability that the invalid might awake, and search for the will, which seemed now to be the predominant object of his solicitude. To guard against this occurrence, she folded up a sheet of coarse paper to the exact size of the original, and was cautiously insinuating it beneath the pillow, when Hoffman, who was very easily awakened, suddenly opened his eyes, and demanded, in a peevish tone, "Heik! fot de teufel is all dis? fot is de madder?"

"Your head had slipped off the pillow, and I was endeavouring to replace it," said Mrs. Lomax; while with perfect self-possession she thrust the suppositious will into the desired position.

"Bah! don't you drouble and plague me, but leave me to mineself: neverdeless I most have mine head upon de billow. Hah! I bote de will dere; where is de will?" Extending his arm, he felt the paper, and continued drowsily—"Goot, goot! it is all right. Go to your baid, go to your baid! I have god de bellrope at mine hand, and if I want any ding I will — "

The remainder of the sentence dropped into an inarticulate murmur, which presently became a snore; when Mrs. Lomax stole on tiptoe across the room, opened the door without noise, shut it as softly, and hurried to her husband, bearing with her the will, which she had thrust into her pocket.

In moments of peril and strong excitement, the thoughts hurry through the fermenting brain with such velocity, that she was enabled, short as was the distance she had to traverse, to weigh not only the difficulties she was likely to encounter in bending her husband to her fearful purpose, but to consider the most probable means of surmounting them. Should he hesitate to perpetrate the proposed crime, it would be rather, she suspected, from the fear of its detection than from any high-principled

abhorrence of its commission; so that, if she could once persuade him of his safety, she did not anticipate much trouble in conquering his scruples.

Condemned as he was by circumstances and the frowns of fortune to a life of toil and self-denial, she knew him, nevertheless, to be naturally indolent and voluptuous-propensities on which she placed no small reliance for the success of her machinations; and, although he did not share her own headstrong and ungovernable passion for their son, she believed him to be sufficiently attached to both his children gladly to seize an opportunity of promoting their interests, especially if, by so doing, he could essentially, and for the remainder of his life, minister to the gratification of his own desires and appetites. On her knowledge of these particulars, as well as on her habitual ascendency over him, she relied for success in the nefarious and life-involving violation of the law to which she was now about to urge him.

Entering their apartment with a stealthy step, she locked the door gently, seated herself in a chair, drew up a long breath, and remained for a minute or two silent, as if pondering in what way she should break the guilty purpose with which her heart was swelling.

"Put on your neckcloth again," she at length said, with a calm voice, for Lomax, wearied with his last night's vigils, was preparing to undress himself; "put on your neckcloth, and waken all your faculties to listen to me, for we have business in hand, weighty and momentous business, that will demand our whole attention, and occupy us all the night."

"All the night!" yawned the husband, with a look of displeasure and surprise; "what can it be? Has any thing happened to Hoffman?"

"Where are the children?" asked Mrs. Lomax, not heeding his interrogatories. "Mary is in the parlour, working, and Benjamin is reading to her."

"Joel Lomax, listen to me," repeated the vife, in a subdued and emphatic tone, "and if you have any questions to ask, any remarks to make, for Heaven's sake raise not your voice above the level of mine: I have matter to unfold which must reach no earthly ear but our's, and never pass hereafter from our lips - no, not with our dying breath. You will believe, my dear husband, for my whole married life will attest my devotion to you and to our children, that I would not recommend any such momentous measure for your adoption unless I thought it indispensably necessary to our common welfare. Your interest is mine, mine is your's, our's is their's; but in what I am about to propose self has been my last consideration, or rather it has exerted no influence whatever; for I call you to witness that, in all our reverses and trials, sharp as they have been, I have never uttered a complaint, never flinched from any labour or privation, however humiliating, which was imposed upon us by our unhappily altered circumstances."

"I always said, Jane, that you bore troubles and vexations better than any woman in the world," replied the husband, wondering not a little what was to follow this impressive preamble.

"My dear Joel," resumed his companion, as she drew her chair closer, and took the hand of her husband in her own, "I felt perhaps as keenly as yourself, but I would not increase your sufferings by useless lamentations. You have experienced how wretched and stinging it is to be precipitated from a state of respectability and comfort into a sphere of penury and toil, with whose vulgar and repulsive occupants your soul recoiled from associating. You have known what it is to be an object of pity or contempt, both equally hateful, to those

who were formerly your equals, or even your inferiors. You have tasted the nauseating bitterness of poverty, I might almost say of want. Incessant drudgery, the contumely and insoknce of hard-hearted task-masters, the degrading beleaguerment of duns, coarse and scanty fare, an abode of which you were ashamed, apparel that compelled you to shun your former acquaintance for fear of being shunned by them, privations and self-denial, and all the unutterable loathsomeness of penury, immeasurably aggravated by being shared with those whom you loved the most tenderly, have oppressed your body and soul, until your spirit is almost broken, and your head is bowed down with despondency. If these are hard to bear now, now that you can at least earn the sorry pittance on which we subsist, how intolerable will they become when sickness or age shall have incapacitated you for exertion, and you will have no prospect before you but a miserable death in a poorhouse, embittered by the reflection that you are leaving your family utterly destitute!"

"What is the use," sighed Lomax, in a querulous tone, "of harping upon my unhappy lot, unless you can show me how I am to avoid it?"

"Now, Joel," resumed the wife, "mark well my words, and tell me, would it not delight you to have this grinding, this withering, this oppressive weight, rolled from off your heart for ever? And not from your's alone, but from our darling Benjamin's, from mine, from Mary's? Would it not rejoice your soul to be suddenly lifted up from this slough of despond, and elevated for the remainder of your days into a station of ease, comfort, independence, wealth, such as should empower you to raise your dejected head, and repay tenfold the scorn of those who have scorned you — to command respect and homage from the proudest of those

whom we knew in our better days—to have, henceforward, no other business than amusement and recreation—to occupy a handsome house—to possess carriages, horses, and servants—to banquet every day upon delicious fare and heart-rejoicing wines—to see your family participating in all these blessings—and when you are summoned hence, after a life prolonged and made happy by all the appliances of wealth, to die with the soothing certainty that those whom you have loved will follow out the same enviable career of enjoyment and independence?"

"What avails it, Jane, to tantalize me with this glorious vision, unless you can point out the means of its accomplishment? As there can be but one answer to your questions, it must be either superfluous or unfeeling to propose them with such an earnest and tempting minuteness."

"You are right; there is but one answer to

them; you would hail with ecstasy this blessed change in our fate, if it could be effected with perfect safety, without trouble, without loss of character, without imputation of any sort. Well, then, it can be so effected; with your assistance I can make you, in the course of this very night, happy, independent, rich, all that I have promised, and more."

"You, Jane! you! How, how? I do not understand your words. You cannot be in earnest; and methinks our poverty forms but a sorry subject for a jest."

"See you this paper? It is Hoffman's will; I have just drawn it from beneath his pillow. By this instrument, which he purposes to execute to-morrow, he has left his entire fortune to his nephew Ruddock."

"I am not surprised at it: some expressions, that dropped from him at Cheltenham, prepared me for this disposition of his property; but how are your wild reveries to be accomplished by the enrichment of Edward Rud-dock?"

"More than twenty times, Joel, have I heard you boast that from long practice you can so correctly imitate any law hand-writing as to deceive even the original penman. Now tell me, and before you answer weigh well all the incalculable blessings and advantages of the measure, weigh well its glorious results, as you are a man, a husband, and a father, and tell me why you should not sit up to-night and make an exact fac-simile of this will, only substituting for the name of Edward Ruddock that of our darling Benjamin?"

"Good God!" ejaculated Lomax, as he started back, with a look of amazement and dismay, "forge a will! Why, it is a felony—a capital offence—a hanging—"

"Hush!" interposed the wife, placing her hand upon his mouth; "speak not so loud—utter not a word, except in a whisper, I conjure,

I command, you!" and her features assumed that authoritative expression to which her pliable spouse had been accustomed to defer.

"Are you aware," resumed Lomax, in an agitated whisper, "that what you are proposing to me is a hanging matter, and that you, yourself, as a counsellor and accessory, would be perhaps incurring a similar penalty?"

"There is no risk, and consequently no penalty for either of us, unless we are detected, and of that, as I will presently convince you, there is not a possibility."

"Indeed! how can that be? Satisfy me upon this point, and I may listen to you with less alarm and repugnance than I now feel."

"Where there is discovery, it proceeds almost invariably from the treachery of some confederate. Now, in this case we have no accomplices. You and I are identical; we are one. We cannot betray one another without receiving and entailing indelible infamy both

upon ourselves and our children—a potent secunty for our mutual silence and good faith."

"But without any perfidy or indiscretion on our parts we may be detected by others, by circumstances, by a thousand unforeseen accidents."

"Not by a single one. Hoffman is known to be an eccentric being, an oddity, a humourist, who, having announced that he had disinherited his nephew, is as likely to select a street pauper as any other for his heir. A dozen people at least have already hinted their expectation that you might be adopted by him. It is notorious that you are now his favourite, so far as he can love any thing; the will, therefore, will excite little or no surprise; it will be a nine-days'-wonder for the world, but a source of happiness and independence to us and our's so long as we remain upon earth."

"But will Hoffman execute it without again examining or reading it over?"

"Yes; for he particularly wishes its contents to be kept a profound secret from all, especially from Mr. Vandermeulen."

"You assured me that your scheme could be carried into execution not only without danger, but without loss of character."

"And so it can. Where there is no detection, I repeat, there can be no loss of character. Who is there to suspect us? Who can justify his suspicions, even if he entertain them? We shall gain, not lose in reputation, for the stigma of poverty will be no longer branded upon our brow, and we shall receive that reverence and respect which are never refused to wealth."

"But how shall we justify our spoliation of Edward Ruddock?"

"Tush! call it not spoliation. How can we deprive a man of that which he never possessed? Not knowing his loss, he loses nothing. He has gone to South America as a disinherited man. He can have no hope, for he believes

his uncle to be inexorable. He is young, active, clever — qualities which will probably assist him to make a handsome fortune for himself, so that we shall have done him no real wrong, while we shall have conferred an inestimable blessing upon ourselves."

"But in the very act of executing the will, may not one glance of Hoffman's eye reveal our forgery, and expose us to instant infamy and punishment?"

"No. In the first place he is half blind, and secondly, he is quite as anxious as we can be to conceal the contents of the paper. See, it is already folded so that the concluding lines alone are visible. The most prying eye and inquisitive spirit will be unable to penetrate within it at the moment of its execution; and we may be well assured that it will be restored immediately afterwards to its hiding-place beneath his pillow."

Slowly unfolding the paper, Lomax sate with

his eye fixed upon it; but his bosom was too much agitated by contending emotions to allow him to peruse it with any degree of compre-Before his mental eye floated, in gorgeous and seductive array, all the allurements of wealth, so glowingly painted by his wife, the homage that it invariably extorts from the myriad worshippers of Mammon, the fascinations of honourable station in society, the witchery, the enchantment, to a poor dependent drudge, of perpetual freedom from care and toil, the delights of a handsome establishment, of luxury, amusement, and indulgence in all his favourite pursuits and appetites. But, on the other hand, his thronging fears conjured up before him the grisly phantom of detection, infamy, imprisonment, and the final expiation of his crime by a public execution on the gallows! His mind, which had only partially recoiled from the commission of the meditated offence, shrunk in dismay from the contemplation of its consequences; his terrors predomisated over his hopes and yearnings; a shudder an through his whole frame; and, letting the paper fall upon the table, he exclaimed with a faltering voice and averted eyes, for he was afraid to look his wife in the face, "Jane, let as go no farther in this dreadful business; take away the will, and replace it—for Heaven's sake, replace it where you found it! Some devil must have tempted you: the consequences are too frightful — a horrible abyss is yawning at our feet. The gallows! the gallows! My blood runs cold at the very thought. I tremble all over."

"Shadows have often made you tremble, while I have stood undaunted in the midst of real dangers. Are you not ashamed of your-self?"

A look of involuntary contempt passed over the features of the speaker, and she was on the point of sharply upbraiding her husband with his misgivings and irresolution, when approaching footsteps were heard; some one tried the handle of the locked door; and immediately afterwards three gentle taps were given on the panel. Had Lomax been detected in the very perpetration of the suggested crime, his countenance could scarcely have assumed an aspect of greater horror.

"Chicken-hearted creature! are you afraid of your own thoughts?" whispered the wife, in an accent of scornful reproach. "Shut those staring, fear-fraught eyes, and pretend to be asleep; you are fit for nothing else." So saying, she folded up the will, which she again committed to her pocket, and with a calm look and unembarrassed manner unlocked and opened the door.

## CHAPTER III.

"Croakings of ravens, or the screech of owls, Are not so boding mischief as thy crossing My private meditations. Shun me, prythee, And if I cannot love thee heartily, I'll love thee as well as I can."

THE BROKEN HEART.

THE party by whom they had been thus startled in the midst of their guilty consultation proved to be their son, a youth about fifteen years of age, whose singular beauty, irradiated by an incipient consumption, of which his parents did not yet suspect the existence, almost justified the fond averment of the mother, when, in answer to her husband's occasional observation that Benjamin was more like a girl than a boy, she would rejoin—"And more like an angel than either."

A sur una entrustrat de ante bloces desmed er ong to bever mi rocentrate into a inet terms first begrowed by its reseate tint, the incress of the natural skip, which was so massages that mere matter maileation of the line terms was incominds beneath it. His time eyes, mild in their expression as those of the dive, had already are aired the yearly bue and Mould laster sometiments of the insidious complaint lurking in his system, although they did not yet blaze with any of that preternatural and fearful brilliancy which generally characterizes its later stages. In compliance with his mother's wish, he wore his auburn hair parted on the forehead, and falling down in wavy lines on either side—a peculiarity which, in conjunction with his delicate beauty and winning countenance, completed the seraphic character of his head.

Nor were the qualities of Benjamin's mind, so far as they had been hitherto developed, less prepossessing than his exterior. Frank, "I have not forgotten your kind injunction that I should go to bed at an early hour," said the son, as he turned his love-beaming looks upon his parents: "but I should have had little chance of sleeping, unless I had previously wished you good night, and received your usual blessing."

"God bless you, my dear boy!" murmured the father, whose voice still trembled from the agitation into which he had been thrown.

"God bless you, my beloved Benjamin!" ejaculated the mother, as she threw her arms around his neck, and impressed a kiss upon either cheek.

"I believe that your blessings and prayers have already done me good," said the youth, "for I feel much better within these few days, and I hope I shall now soon be quite well. Very, very grateful am I to Heaven for this little improvement, and I pray that I may never forget the mercies vouchsafed to me! 'Tis on your

or in quite such necessitous circumstances as formerly."

"Thanks to worthy Mr. Hoffman for all his goodness to us. How is he to-night, dear mother?"

"He fancies himself better, but he is in reality worse—much worse."

"Poor man! I am sorry for his sad condition; it quite makes my heart throb to think of him. I always pray for him before I go to sleep, and this night I will be more urgent than ever in my prayers."

"Leave him to the care of Heaven, and get to sleep as soon as you can," said Mrs. Lomax, as if she feared that there might be some efficacy in her son's intercessions. "Good night, my dear boy! your father and I have important business to transact, and besides it is time you were a-bed." So saying, she again embraced him, accompanied him to the door, locked it when he had passed out of hearing, returned to

own better and cooler judgment will confess that it is an abominable scheme—an act of the blackest ingratitude; for surely, surely, it would rather become us to be imitating our dear boy, by praying for the recovery of our benefactor, than to be wronging him thus cruelly, and placing a halter around our own necks."

"Wrong him! how can we wrong the dead?" demanded the wife in a tone of angry impatience; "how place a halter around our necks, when I have proved to you that there is no possibility of detection? Is it your own cant and cowardice, or this paltry pittance of two hundred pounds, that has suggested such futile objections? To what does it amount, this insulting legacy, so inadequate to our services? It supplies one year's subsistence, and then consigns us to all the horrors of drudging, abject, and squalid poverty."

<sup>&</sup>quot;But with an unblemished name."

<sup>&</sup>quot;No -with the stigma of penury, the most

She had intended to pronounce this word with a marked energy; but in the vehemence of her feelings her voice broke into a sob, which rendered it almost inaudible, and the tears started involuntarily into her eyes. A moment's pause restoring her self-possession, she continued in a firm and impressive tone:

"Without my darling Benjamin, I would not, could not, live; I should soon follow him to the grave, and in that event I swear to you most solemnly, and I call upon Heaven to witness and to register my vow, that my ghost shall haunt and torment you, so long as you remain upon earth! Whithersoever you may wander, at home or abroad, by night and by day, in sickness or in health, in solitude or in society, I will dog your footsteps, and whisper in your ear, even as I do now—Parricide! give me back the son whom you have murdered!"

The sepulchral earnestness of her voice, the passion that convulsed her countenance, the

"I have foreseen all and provided for all. I will take care that there shall be a good fire in the room, and if any attempt be made by Hoffman to read the paper, which I do not in the least anticipate, I will instantly snatch it from his hand and thrust it between the bars. We may then be suspected, but it will be impossible to prove any thing against us; we may be turned out of the house, but so we should, at all events, as soon as he is dead."

"You forget, however, that we should lose the legacy."

"Is it not well worth risking so paltry a sum for the chance, I might rather say for the certainty, of an independence for life—for the inestimable assurance of preserving our dear boy, who is far more precious to us than life itself? See!" continued the wife, as she drew a large sheet of paper from her husband's writing-desk, and held it up to the candle—"this is not only of the same quality, but

from the writing, and you will merely have to substitute for the name of Edward Ruddock that of Benjamin Lomax."

"No!" exclaimed the husband, drawing back with an air of more resolute determination than he had yet evinced; "if I am to put my neck into a halter, it shall be for myself, and not for another. I will not risk my life for any body but Joel Lomax. Why not insert my own name instead of Benjamin's?"

"I know not," replied his wife; "I was thinking of nothing but our dear Benjamin, and so his name alone occurred to me; but as my sole end, which is our precious boy's advantage, will be not less fully attained if the fortune be secured to yourself in the first instance than if—"

"Besides," interposed Lomax, "you have heard nobody intimate that our son was likely to be Hoffman's heir, while it is already deemed highly probable by many that all his property

Vandermeulen," should be copied verbatim, only substituting the name of Joel Lomax for that of the nephew, and adding, "as a reward for his faithful services, but more especially for his kind and unremitting attentions to me during my long illness at Cheltenham." The codicil was, of course, to be omitted altogether. Lomax, whose apprehensions had been sileuced for the moment, and whose heart was swelling with the anticipation of the aggrandizement that awaited him, set himself busily to his task, while his wife, cautioning him to lock the door after her, quitted the room in order to send her daughter to bed, and to revisit the sick chamber, where she was detained two or three hours by Hoffman, who, in his inability to sleep, insisted upon her reading over to him all her recent entries of minute expenditure in what he termed "de betty gash boke." To many of these articles he objected with as much peevish cavilling as if he had twenty years to live and

ness at each repetition, seemed to announce that the approaching tempest was about to break over the city.

"This is very awful," said Lomax, depositing his pen, and speaking in an agitated whisper. "This is a bad omen: one would think that Heaven, to whose eye alone our guilty occupation is revealed, warned us by this terrible summons to desist."

"Ridiculous! how can you give way to such idle superstition? Heaven is much more likely to approve than to interrupt our pious purpose. Why did it implant parental feelings in our bosoms, but that we might obey their dictates?"

"There is another crash," faltered Lomax;

"it seemed directly over our heads; and how vivid was the lightning! Dearest Jane! let us wait a little; there is no hurry, and I cannot write; I can scarcely hold the pen, while I am

manded the wife, arresting the progress of the paper, which was sliding off the desk. "Simpleton! it is only Hoffman's bell; the thunder has disturbed him; but he cannot long resist the potent opiate I have given him. Keep quiet, and do nothing till I return; I cannot trust you to act by yourself."

With these words, she hurried out of the room, and its solitary occupant remained in a bewilderment of various emotions, in which, however, fear was predominant, until, after the lapse of half an hour, his wife re-appeared, announcing that the invalid had again sunk to slumber, and urging her husband to the immediate completion of his task. To prevent all hesitation or mistake, she stood by his side, dictating the words as he wrote, in which manner the forged document was finished without further interruption; when Lomax, having carefully folded it, so that nothing but the concluding line and the date might be visible at

fidence of her air assumed not the language, it produced the effect of a command upon the ductile and irresolute mind of her auditor, who took off his shoes in silent obedience, and stole tremblingly after her, until they reached the bottom of the stairs, where his companion observed that, as there were only iron bars, and no shutters to the window, it would be safer to leave the candle behind them when they entered the kitchen. They did so accordingly, and, drawing the door after them, were crossing the floor, when a gleam of lightning, emitted by the receding clouds, irradiated for a moment the whole apartment. Clinging in agitation to his wife, Lomax stammered in her ear as he drew her back:

"Stop—stop! I saw a ma—a ma— a man at the window!— a tall, thin man with a lowcrowned hat."

"A man! impossible! who would let himself down into the area on such a night as this? for shame! Have you not one particle of manhood in your craven heart?"

"The bravest may tremble at guilt, and I am only astonished that you can be so perfectly calm and collected. Dear Jane, it is not yet too late to recede, but if the will be once destroyed—"

"Look you, Joel, I am not a person to be trifled with, nor to be frightened by bugbears from a resolution that I have once deliberately formed. We have gone too far in this matter to stop short, nor am I so weak and pusillanimous, woman as I am, as to lose the glorious prize when it is within my reach. I will do my duty to my dear boy, ay, and so shall you. You must not, nay, you shall not, flinch from your purpose. What? still peering with a timid eye at the window? Well, I will remove all your doubts and fears. Behold! I place this screen upon the dresser, and now, if there were a dozen men in the area, not one of them

myself am concerned. My blessed Benjamin is saved from toil, from hardship, from poverty, and all its hideous accompaniments, perhaps from death itself, and this pious end sanctifies the means we have employed for its attainment."

"But in the eye of the law," sighed Lomax, "which pronounces our offence to be felony without benefit of—Hist! hark!— what noise was that? Did you not hear a rattling? Some one is trying the scullery door. We are lost—we are discovered! Good Heaven protect us! My heart throb—throbs so, I can scarcely sp—speak."

"Better be silent than give way to such disgraceful terrors. Why do you suffer yourself to be made the fool of your senses?"

"In a good cause I can be as bold as another; but, in committing this unholy fraud upon our dying benefactor, I feel quite unmanned. I am not deceived, Jane; I certainly saw a by the opiate, she contrived, without disturbing him, to insert the new will beneath his pillow, and to withdraw the folded paper which she had previously placed there. cult, notwithstanding the natural violence of her passions, to drive or to entice out of the paths of rectitude. The conviction that she was acting without a single feeling or wish for self-aggrandizement, not only made her appear disinterested in her own eyes, but gave to her conduct the seeming sanction of maternal duty, which she held to be paramount over all other obligations.

But, although she could thus hoodwink her clear perceptions on the score of morality, she could not conceal from herself, whatever confidence she might assume when conversing with her husband, the fearful risks she was incurring. Aware that a hundred unforeseen accidents, against which it was impossible to guard, might involve herself and her accomplice, at the critical moment when the will was produced for signature, in a capital charge, she endeavoured to calculate the more obvious and probable contingencies, to prepare for them as far as

shrinking. Strange! that you who have consented to this deed-you, who have thus far assisted in it-you, whose whole future life is to be made glorious by its success - should prove a recreant, and desert me when it is to receive its final accomplishment. Be it so. Leave every thing to me. I am better without than with you; but mark me, Joel! if you will not assist, you shall not thwart me. Neither I nor my scheme shall be put in jeopardy by your miserable want of self-possession. Quit not your room. This is my positive injunction - nay, my command. To account for your absence I will pretend that you are indisposed; I will remain with Hoffman until he has executed the will, or refused to sign it; and, when I next return to you, it shall be with tidings that our prospects are either made or marred for ever!"

So saying, she hastened back to Hoffman's apartment, who awoke as she entered, and de-

could persuade him that Vandermeulen was using underhand means to penetrate the secret of its contents. Throwing out hints, therefore, of his impertinent curiosity, she insinuated that he had been sounding her upon the subject, but that, in conformity to her solemn pledge, she had made no disclosure whatever, and had professed a total inability to satisfy his doubts.

"Goot! goot!" cried Hoffman, "dat is right, mine worthy Mrs. Lomax. Hah! he is gurious, is he? O de knave, de busy, prying, knave. He shall know ebery ding by and by. Where is de will? Hah, dere it is, I veel it onder mine billow, and dat reminds me what dere are dwo or dree directions I want to give in case I should never ged oop again."

"I shall be happy to receive any instructions," said Mrs. Lomax, drawing nearer to the bed.

"Virst and voremost, you must tell your

I wish to do jostice to mine poor neplisall; and now you need not disturb will dry and gompose myself a liddle.'

As the appointed hour approache Lomax, whose collected countenance; the least intimation of the feelings till busy within her, omitted no prelimin rangement that might facilitate the such her purpose. Unknown to the invalid would otherwise have objected to her fulness, she made up a blazing fire, so would presently consume the evidence crime, should she be reduced to the desextremity of snatching and committing the flames. Pens and ink were placed small table close to the bed-side, while she self

"Shall I fill in the date, sir?" demanded Vandermeulen, who had slipped into the room unperceived by any one.

"No, dank you—no, dank you. Mrs. Lomax is close to de dable, and she will fill in de prober date. You will vind, mine goot Vandermeulen, dat I remember your hint about your son."

A sardonic expression writhed his cadaverous features, for even on his death-bed he seemed to feel pleasure in avenging himself upon his partner, for having attempted, as he thought, to bamboozle him out of his property.

In inserting the date, Mrs. Lomax took care so to arrange the paper, as that only the concluding lines should be visible; when Hoffman, who had suspiciously fixed his dull, sunken eye upon her during the process, immediately took it from her hand, and called for a pen. Before he used it, however, he uttered a deep-drawn sigh, or rather groan, and exclaimed in a sorrowful voice:

a witness to the will, (insinuating thereby that he was to take some benefit under it,) but that he might see him sign it.

"Will it not be more convenient for signature," asked Vandermeulen, "if the paper be unfolded?"

"Hah! goot, goot! dat is soon done," said the dying man, making a show as if he were about to comply with the request. Mrs. Lomax, whose throbbing heart was in her mouth, cast a rapid glance at the fire, and drew nearer to the bed, that she might snatch away the document in the event of a discovery; but Hoffman, who had guessed his partner's motives, and found a malicious pleasure in tantalizing him, again placed his hand upon the closed paper as he added:

"No, dere is blenty of room for de witnesses, so do you hold it steady for dem to sign."

Vandermeulen had now no alternative but to do as he was bidden; the physicians and the tongue, answer the question which you are afraid to put. Are they not radiant with pride, joy, glory, triumph? Hark you, Joel," she continued, bringing her mouth close to his ear, and speaking in an eager whisper, "success has crowned our enterprize; all our wishes are accomplished; signed, and sealed, and witnessed, without exciting a moment's suspicion: the will, the executed will, is securely deposited beneath Hoffman's pillow; the great object of my soul is attained; and my darling Benjamin is made a gentleman for life; and that life, that precious life, will be prolonged by the thousand luxuries and resources that wealth alone can command!"

"Ha! say you so? say you so? Is it all over? are we safe—quite safe? Oh, what a crushing, what an insupportable load have you removed from my heart! So, then, I am a rich man; released for the remainder of my days from care, poverty, and toil; nothing to do but

declare, cannot be delayed beyond two or three days, when all will be our's, our's for our dear Benjamin; and our's, too, as I verily believe, without challenge or suspicion. Had we prompted his very words, Hoffman could not more effectually have promoted our views, for he distinctly stated, in the hearing of all, that he was fully sensible of our kindness, and had not forgotten us in his will—a declaration which must for ever remove all doubts of its authenticity. And yet at one moment I was on the very point of snatching it from his grasp, and thrusting it into the fire."

She related the cause; when Lomax, clutching her hand, and gazing at her with a look of admiring wonder, exclaimed:

"You do not tremble, dear Jane, you are not agitated: is it possible that you can be thus calm and collected, when within these few minutes you were standing on the brink of so tremendous a precipice? How I envy you your

"If I were attending upon him at the moment, I should be too much scared to know what to say or to do."

"Of that I am well aware, and you had better, therefore, absent yourself from his apartment as much as possible. As I have said that you are indisposed, you can easily—Hark! there is his bell; I must return to him."

During the course of that afternoon, Hoffman became considerably worse; his pains, which had quitted him for several previous days, were renewed with violence; he seemed to be rapidly sinking; and Lomax, whose spirit was cruel because it was cowardly, could not conceal his exultation when apprised that his decease might be almost hourly expected. To the surprise, however, of all, a composing-draught, which gave him a few hours' sleep, wrought so marvellous a change on the morrow, that, believing he had now passed the crisis of his

be allowed to prolong his life, if it endangered that of herself, her husband, and her son.

She who had come without much difficulty to the conclusion we have just been stating, would a few days before have recoiled with horror from the very thought of shortening the days of her benefactor; but one crime often necessitates twenty to prevent its detection; and her mind, fertile in self-deceiving sophistry, now suggested a variety of pleas to palliate, if not to justify, its dark conceptions. It would be a mercy, she argued, to Hoffman himself, to prevent his existence from being protracted for a few months longer, only that he might endure additional sickness and suffering. Who would miss him, whose life could be so well spared? Where would be the harm of infusing a little additional laudanum into his opiate, and thus consigning him pleasantly and unconsciously to the sleep of death? Besides, self-preservation

resuscitation of his powers, she was afraid to trust her husband in the apartment, and resolved to pass this night, as she had done the last, by the bed-side of the patient—a determination to which she was the more impelled by a suspicion that Vandermeulen might make some attempt upon the will. Nature, however, would not second her desires. Worn out by sleeplessness and anxiety, she became so exhausted as night approached, that she was obliged to retire to bed, and to despatch her husband to the sick room, charging him to give her immediate intelligence of any thing that might occur, and above all things not to allow Vandermeulen to have access to the will.

Not long after Lomax had taken his station by the bed-side, the dying man recovered his powers of speech, but the incoherent nature of his discourse showed that his wits were wandering. He talked of Muscovade sugars, of falling and rising markets, of lumps, and loaves, Lomax complied with his request, and, as he seemed to be falling asleep, he left his hand in his possession for fear of disturbing him, until he himself, wearied with vigils and worn with over-excitement, sunk into a profound slumber by his side.

Several hours had elapsed, when Mrs. Lomax, awaking before dawn of day, and surprised that she had received no communication from her husband, arose, took a candle, and descended to the sick room, where she found the parties in the attitude we have been describing. The first gleam, however, of the light she bore, assured her that a momentous change had occurred since she left the apartment. Hoffman's open, lustreless, fixed eye, the fallen nether jaw, and that peculiar cadaverous look which, when once seen can never be mistaken, convinced her that the object upon which she was gazing was a corpse! She felt his cheek—it was cold as marble; she laid her hand upon

labouring bosom when it is oppressed by the nightmare, stood transfixed with horror, his eyes distended, his mouth open, his hair on end, and the perspiration starting from his brow.

"Nerveless creature!" ejaculated his wife; "coward as you are, you would not have feared him living; why, then, should you tremble now, when he is no longer a man but a lump of clay? Your arms seem to be utterly paralyzed—let mine release you."

So saying, she deposited the candle on the bed, and, with a vigorous, unshrinking hand, proceeded to unlock the fingers from their hold, a task which required some little exertion of strength.

At this moment the hideous ghastliness of the attenuated corpse, the stern expression of the still handsome female, whose compressed lips, drawn down at the corners, indicated a contempt to which she disdained to

you. Away, away! daylight is breaking; — when you encounter Mary, inform her that the shutters must all be kept closed. Did not Mr. Vandermeulen desire to be instantly apprised of Hoffman's death?"

"He gave me repeated injunctions to that effect."

"We must comply with them; every thing must be done in order. I will proceed forthwith to his house. Will you remain with the corpse until I return?"

"No, no, no!" ejaculated Lomax with an alarmed look. "He cannot want me now; see, what a mark his fingers have left on my wrist—my whole hand is chilled. You will find me in our room."

"Be it so; and let me find you, if possible, with a look better adapted to your altered condition."

With these words the speaker left the apartment, put on her hat and cloak, and

## CHAPTER V.

"Twas his own voice—she could not err;
Throughout the breathing world's extent,
There was but one such voice for her,
So kind, so soft, so eloquent."

LALLA ROOKH.

ALTHOUGH Vandermeulen was tolerably confident that the deceased had acceded to his request, and made him his heir, he had for some time past harboured a growing jealousy of Lomax, and had viewed with an evil eye the marked and unprecedented favour extended to his family. Hoffman's dying declaration that he was grateful for their kindness, and had not forgotten them in his will, had been heard with no pleasaut feelings; for, although he did not

testamentary dispositions will fully bear me out. He chose, however, to affect latterly some degree of secrecy upon this subject; we know not whom he has named as his executors, nor can we tell, consequently, who will be empowered to give directions about his funeral. To settle these points, the will must be immediately opened and perused; but, as we cannot give too much publicity to our proceedings, where there are no relatives to call in as witnesses, I propose that it shall be read in the presence of the medical advisers, who have arranged to call here at twelve o'clock. I have not forgotten, Mr. Lomax, that you have some little interest in this affair; indeed our departed friend intimated as much, but I presume you will not object to my proposition."

"Not in the least, sir, not in the least: whatever you may think proper."

"Do you know where the will is? It is right that I should make this inquiry." excite suspicions; indeed I doubt whether they would proceed to read the will without you. So trifling an ordeal as this you can surely go through, especially as you have some hours to collect your thoughts for the purpose. Ensconce yourself in the darkest corner of the parlour, keep your handkerchief to your face as if overcome by your feelings, say as little as you can, and there can be no doubt that all will pass off well."

"If I must, I must," replied the husband; "but I feel so harassed both in body and mind, that I would willingly have spared myself this additional trial."

"And I, though scarcely less fatigued than yourself, would as gladly undertake it, were it customary for females, not having any claim of relationship, to participate in such proceedings."

A few minutes before the appointed hour, Mr. Vandermeulen arrived with the key in his produce the most important results upon the destinies of Europe."

"I do not attach much credit to it," said the second physician; "the report comes in a very questionable shape, and has, in all probability, been got up for stock-jobbing purposes."

"But, I am told that a French paper is in town, and it can hardly be supposed that ——."

"Had we not better defer this discussion until after the reading of the will?" interposed Vandermeulen. "We are met here for a specific object, to which our attention should surely be directed in the first instance."

"Undoubtedly," said Dr. H——, adjusting his spectacles; "but, if I had that French newspaper in my hand, I cannot promise that I should not run my eye over the leading article before I read a single line of the will. However, to business, to business; are you all ready, and attentive? Hem!" Assent was

"Really, Dr. H——," said Vandermeulen, with a look of displeasure, "this levity, upon so solemn an occasion, is not only indecorous in itself, but highly disrespectful towards my very worthy and much-lamented friend. I must request that you will proceed with the business upon which we are met. I cannot listen to any thing that sounds like a want of proper feeling for the deceased."

"Well, if I cannot win your money, you will not, I am sure, refuse to lend me your ears.

Attention! Hem!"

With a clear loud voice he now read the testator's opening declaration that he rescinded and annulled his former will, because it had not given satisfaction to his partner.

"Kind-hearted creature!" interposed Vandermeulen. "It did give me satisfaction, singular satisfaction; I only ventured to suggest one trifling emendation, and I can never be sufficiently grateful that he should so readily medical conclave looked at one another with smiles of wonderment; Lomax leaned back in his chair, and hid his face in his handkerchief, as if struggling with his feelings; while Vandermeulen, whose eager, hungry visage, even to his lips, became pale with disappointment and rage, exclaimed in a voice of forced composure, though he could hardly command breath enough for the question:—" Will you allow me, Doctor, just to—look over this—very extraordinary—paper?"

On its being handed to him, he hurried to the window, devoured its contents with angerglaring eyes, turned over the leaf to ascertain that there was no codicil or addition, and then reperused it from beginning to end. Its authenticity he did not for a moment doubt: nothing, indeed, occurred to him upon which a suspicion could be hung. On the contrary, his busy thoughts recalled two or three circumstances that tended to confirm it, and he inwardly

his churlish unforgiving spirit: that, in the want of a more eligible heir, he should select his clerk, was equally conformable to his capricious and eccentric nature. The reflection that he had completely outwitted himself, and that in grasping at too much he had missed all, gave such an additional exacerbation to his feelings, that he could not refrain from exclaiming aloud: -"Scandalous treatment! Infamous! this disposition of his property is utterly disgraceful. His conduct towards me has been neither that of a gentleman nor an honest man, still less that of a friend. Who but an insidious hollowhearted curmudgeon would have played me such a scurvy trick?"

"My good sir," said Dr. H——, laying his hand demurely upon his bosom, "allow me, for the first and last time, to quote from yourself, and to remind you that such language is not only indecorous in itself, but highly disrespectful towards our very worthy and much-

rage, or rather chased away his misgivings, drew up a long breath, wiped the perspiration from his brow, and, feeling collected enough for a little bit of acting, ventured to ask permission to peruse the will. Fixing his regards upon his own hand-writing, he ran over the lines with a well simulated air of amazement, ejaculating as he concluded:—"Wonderful! wonderful! This is unexpected, indeed!"

"Mr. Lomax," said Dr. H——, "I am no hypocrite, and I will not, therefore, express any joy at your being thus strangely enriched, for I cannot but feel that this property, though you are no ways answerable for its present appropriation, ought to have gone to my worthy young friend, Ned Ruddock. I hope Hoffman may be forgiven for the unrelenting spirit in which he died, and I sincerely trust that his fortune may reflect a greater share of happiness and respectability upon its present possessor, than it did upon him who scraped it together.

as we can only be betrayed by ourselves, we had better henceforth place a seal upon our lips, and recur as little as possible to this perilous subject. If we are obliged to mention it, let it be in a whisper that cannot possibly reach any ear but our own."

"But, surely you wish to know all that passed at the reading; you must allow me to tell you with what a demure face of wonder I read my own hand-writing, and how admirably I feigned astonishment when my own name was pronounced."

"Subdue your voice, then, so that even the walls of this narrow room shall be unable to hear it."

In whispered tones and a literal tête-à-tête, Lomax detailed all that had passed, when his wife, reminding him that she had never entertained any doubts or fears of their final success, inquired whether he had now discarded all his own apprehensions. "I should not have a we call him in, and communicate to him the happy tidings?"

Without awaiting her husband's consent, to which, indeed, she seldom attached much importance, she opened the door, summoned her son into the apartment, and, after having tenderly embraced him, apprised him of the great and unexpected change in their fortune; making, however, no allusion to Hoffman's nephew, of whose existence he knew nothing. Sudden surprise, and an involuntary sympathy with his mother's undisguised delight, flushed the features and brightened the eyes of the beautiful youth; but, in the sensibility of his affectionate heart and his indifference to worldly wealth, he seemed, after a moment, rather to regret the loss of their generous benefactor, than to rejoice at the opulence which had flowed in upon his parents. His features resumed their usual sedate expression, and there was a touching tone of plaintiveness in his the reflection that you have obtained this great acquisition without struggle or compromise of any sort. How few, whatever may be their talents and industry, achieve riches without some sacrifice of character, or some secret deviation from the paths of honour and justice. But you have nothing with which to upbraid yourselves; you have violated no law, human or divine; you have deceived none, injured none, defrauded none, and Heaven can hardly fail to bless a fortune thus irreproachably acquired."

Lomax and his wife cast a glance at each other; both reddened with a blush of guilty consciousness; both hastily bent their eyes upon the ground; both felt, for the first time, though not in the deadly bitterness they were subsequently doomed to experience, the most painful of all humiliations, that which is endured by parents when they stand abashed and self-condemned in the presence of their children.

that to invoke a blessing upon herself and her guilty accomplice would only add an unpardonable hypocrisy and profanation to their previous offences, overwhelmed her with such confusion, that she buried her face in her hands, and remained for a brief space fixed in that attitude, without attempting to open the book. As she had wronged a fellow-creature without much compunction, so was she prepared to dare the consequences of her misdeed without a moment's shrinking, so far as it involved worldly punishment or exposure; but her Creator she could not deceive, nor was she yet hardened enough to defy his wrath.

"You are agitated, dear mother," said the son, with a more than usual tenderness in his melodious voice. "You are overcome by thinking of our departed benefactor. Let me supply your place, and I will afterwards read a 'Thanksgiving for any unexpected worldly blessing,' which I have selected as being more

tion and a more exalted expression of piety to his features. Eloquent and impassioned in its language, the composition he had chosen began by recognizing the signal and unexpected favour lately vouchsafed to them, as immediately proceeding from the hand of Heaven—a declaration which neither of the guilty parents could hear without an inward shudder.

Again, as in the morning, they exchanged glances, and once more their abashed eyes were hastily withdrawn, and fixed upon the ground. The juvenile reader, proceeding to express an ardent gratitude for the blessing thus unexpectedly bestowed, and an humble trust that it would neither be forgotten nor misapplied, concluded by fervently imploring that continued favour and protection of Heaven, which were even more necessary in sudden prosperity, and amid the temptations of wealth, than in the hour of adversity and need. The emphatic "Amen!" which he ejaculated in closing the

whispering:—"Are they so? well, then, I will enact Lady Macbeth, and so—"To bed, to bed, to bed, to bed!""

reaction, similar to the languor that succe convulsion. It was the spirit of resistance that enabled her to endure reverses, and e poverty, with such an uncomplaining resolutes. While buffeting with misfortune, scorned either to yield or to repine. Only the absence of an antagonist did she ever gray. None but herself could be her conque:

Both for herself and her accomplice it very perhaps fortunate that they were kept, for so time after the death of Hoffman, in such a petual whirl of occupation, such an unint mitted mental excitement, that they had scarce a moment to reflect upon the nature and petrated. Rumour, with her hundred tongular had no sooner bruited abroad the contents the will, than Lomax and his family became prevalent subject of conversation with all gossips of the city.

That numerous class of wiseacres who

although somewhat too retiring and diffident, was a most charming girl; and as to the son, such an etherial being, such a perfectly angelic youth, had never been seen! Letters of congratulation flowed in from all quarters: the many who had dropped his acquaintance being now anxious to renew it, and the few who had so far remembered him as to return his humble salutation in the streets with a cold half bow, being solicitous to be enrolled among the number of his familiar friends. Duns, who but the week before had pestered him with insolent importunities, now stood hat in hand contending for the honour of executing his orders. If the newly enriched man could have been himself insensible to the great change in his circumstances—for as yet it was not indicated by any alteration in his own appearance or establishment—it would have been forced upon his conviction by the totally altered demeanour of the world.

of the deceased, except as his executor, and who is one of the subscribing witnesses to the will. Prevail on him to accept the office, by all means. The house in which he lives, having belonged to Hoffman, is now our's. To us it is of little worth, although valuable to him from its situation. Suppose you request him to accept it, as a grateful memorial of his professional skill, and assiduous attention to our departed benefactor. He cannot then refuse to act, and you will have secured a staunch friend in your brother executor, which a thousand unforeseen circumstances may render very important."

"Before we talk of giving away, we ought to ascertain what we have got," said the husband, who already seemed to have inherited some portion of his late employer's grasping spirit.

"Not so, Joel; we should first consider whether this trifling gift may not be the means of securing to us all the rest." we are acting in obedience to Hoffman's dying orders; we shall be accused of a mean, scandalous, ungrateful penuriousness, and the whole town, for people are always liberal when it can be done at the expense of others, will cry out Shame! shame! At present, they only envy us for our unexpected good fortune, but if we betray the smallest disposition to use it in a niggardly spirit, they will hate us—an invidious feeling which they who are strong in right and law may despise, if they think fit, but one which in our situation it is much better policy to conciliate, or rather not to call into existence."

These arguments prevailed, and it was determined that the funeral should be rather in accordance with the imputed wealth than the dying directions of Hoffman. But it was easier to get mourning coaches than mourners for the deceased, who had few acquaintance, and no friends. Dr. H—— refused to testify any

by a desire to ingratiate themselves with the living heir, than to show respect to the dead testator.

Instead of being committed to the earth, the coffin was deposited beneath the church, in an extensive range of vaults, of which the meridian gloom was partially dispersed by a few candles flaring in sconces fastened to the wall, and an iron lamp suspended from the crown of the arch. To pass suddenly from the cheerful sunlight, from the bustle of city streets, and all the vitality of nature, into those dim abodes of death, where hundreds of coffined bodies were reposing in grim silence, a dead and voiceless crowd, formed a rapid contrast that might well penetrate and awe the most impassive heart, even without the solemn accompaniments of the funeral ceremony.

Signal was the reprehension of avarice and selfishness afforded by the unsympathising assemblage standing around the coffin of Hoffman.

ings, how should he awaken them when dead? No sorrows had he soothed, no heart had he gladdened, no tear had he dried up; and no sorrows were felt, no heart throbbed, no tears were shed, when his remains, not more cold in death than had been his affections in life, were committed to their last resting-place. He had loved nothing but his money; and that ungrateful object of his idolatry, contributing little to the pleasures of his existence, had only served to embitter the moment when he was compelled to part from it for ever.

To the total indifference generally betrayed by the spectators of this interment there was one exception. It was offered by the son of Lomax. His innocent and susceptible heart, as yet unprofaned by one worldly feeling, and as free from the suspicion of guile or insincerity in others as from the practice of those vices in itself, felt nothing but an unmixed and ardent gratitude towards the benefactor who had given his pusillanimity into a shuddering horror. In some legend or tradition he had read that the evil-doer, standing by the unburied corpse of him whom he had wronged, had been brought to shame and punishment by various preternatural manifestations; and his superstitious mind, yielding implicit credence to these fictions, prepared him for the apparition of a miraculous arraigner, who should proclaim his forgery to the assembled spectators, and perhaps resuscitate the dead body to support his accusation. Every look that he encountered appeared to be that of an enemy seeking his life; every movement startled him, every unusual echo of the hollow arches made his heart sink in his bosom.

With a willing step did he retreat from those dreary habitations of the dead, feeling, when he again saw the cheerful sun, and heard the busy hum of men, as if he had been reprieved at the very foot of the gallows. Even the strongminded wife felt a load removed from her

Vandermeulen, an adjustment which, from his overreaching and covetous character, was not likely to be effected without some difficulty. Hoffman had anticipated and pointed out in his life-time the way in which his executors would probably be cheated by his partner, whose accounts and valuations, when they were given in, abundantly justified his predictions. Conversant with every detail of the business, and well aware that if he settled upon a basis so palpably unfair, he should be sanctioning a fraud upon himself to no insignificant amount, Lomax would have indignantly refused the proffered composition; but his wife, whose keen knowledge of the world taught her that there were circumstances in which the wisest would be the most willing to submit to imposition, counselled him to moderate his anger, and even to sign and pass the accounts as they had been presented.

"But why should we suffer ourselves to be

he wrote to his nephew Ruddock from Cheltenham, sending him his forgiveness, and apprising him that he had ordered a will to be prepared, in which he had made him his sole heir."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the husband, suddenly changing colour, "how unfortunate that we had not ascertained this alarming fact before! Had I known it, I would never, never—Alas! our dangers then are yet to come—we have surmounted nothing—we have yet to struggle for our property—nay, for our very lives."

"Our greatest danger lies in your unguarded voice and brainsick apprehensions. For my part, I am not sorry that we have yet a peril to encounter, if such indeed it be, for it keeps my courage from flagging, saves me as it were from myself, and serves to exercise my forethought. I will feel no fear, and want no vigilance, so long as there exists even an imaginary competitor, who may deprive our dear Benjamin of

now quickened into painful activity by the spect of a new danger, stimulated him to a it. To the great delight of Vandermeulen, felt that he was thus wreaking the most g ful and profitable of all revenges upor deceased partner, his unjust account was si and settled by the executors, and Lomax, I now enabled to wind up the affairs, could a tain the exact amount of the fortune he h fraudulently obtained.

One of the few points upon which the perince an invariable liberality is in estime the wealth of those who are reputed affle since they not infrequently quadruple incomes, and sometimes make a still more rous addition to their riches. But in cases their liberality will be found to be rent rather than real, the imputers of opulence generally following up their extrated statements by all sorts of accusance against the supposititious Crossus for his period.

covereth a multitude of sins, and our's, not reconcile us to Heaven, will at leas to conciliate our fellow-creatures."

Timidity and policy, rather than benev prompted the husband to acquiesce in suggestions: handsome contributions we cordingly bestowed on the leading chand the majority of the Bristolians act that the money was now in better hand in the days of Hoffman, although sor claimed, "As to throwing away a few in gratuities, that was the least they co considering how easily they got their no but they need not have been so osten about the matter."

Only two months had elapsed from the

assume the style of living to which our fortune entitles us, we shall be viewed with far different feelings. They who were lately our equals will hate us for being elevated above their sphere; the class to which we shall now belong will scowl upon us as upstarts and intruders; both, however unpresuming may be our demeanour, will be jealous of our exaltation; both will gladly contribute to our downfall, should an opportunity be presented to them. Hostility such as this, even if it were not perilous to provoke, cannot be pleasant to encounter. While we are yet in fair favour, let us therefore withdraw to some new neighhourhood, where we are utterly unknown, and where consequently we can excite no such angry feelings."

"I care not, Jane, how soon we take our departure, for I tremble all over when I am interrogated, as I was yesterday by Dr. H——, on the subject of the will. But whither do you think of removing?"

"The house at Bermondsey, which was al-

"Certainly, certainly," faltered Lomax; "but it is very dreadful to contemplate any such—
The Lord be good unto us! When shall we depart?"

"There must be no appearance of alarm or flight in our removal. We will give out that we are about to travel for the health of our dear boy, which will plausibly account for our quitting Bristol. Change of air may indeed do him much good. My darling boy, my precious Benjamin! what would I not give to see thee restored to perfect health and strength! I have sometimes thought, in opposition to our medical adviser, that he would flourish better beneath a warmer sun. He has the look, has he not, dear Joel, of some exquisitely beautiful exotic flower, which pines beneath our inclement skies, and would recover all its splendour in a southern clime, or at least in some more genial atmosphere? I wonder that I should ever hav given birth to such a spiritual

## CHAPTER VII.

"Ah! che per tutto io veggo
Qualche ogetto funesto
Che rinfaccia a quest' alma i suoi furori!
Voi, solitari orrori
Da seguarsi rimorsi,
Difendete il mio cor."

HYPSIPE

At the eastern extremity of the parish o mondsey, in the Borough of Southwark, a far removed from the banks of the Thethere stood at the period of our history cient, gloomy, detached building, know the name of Cypress House, an appeared evidently derived from a large tree of the scription which shadowed the back of structure. The fields by which it had been surrounded had long disappeared, l

which, seeming to belong neither to town nor country, and to combine here and there a farm appearance, or even an affectation of ornamental gardening, with manufacturing processes of no very dignified description, puzzle the stranger to decide upon their real character and object, while they equally exercise his ingenuity in conjecturing the description of natives by whom they can be occupied.

Such was the abode which had been chosen by Lomax for his present residence; and, strange as it may sound, he had no sooner set his foot within it than he declared it to be expressly adapted to his purpose. It must be recollected that his taste was not of a very refined order, and that he sought other and more important recommendations than local attraction. Cypress House, with its garden and courtyard, was open and airy; it was in the immediate vicinity of the river; its roof was surmounted by a small circular chamber,

yet divested himself of the fear that he might suddenly be beleaguered by the officers of justice. Nor did he overlook, should such a crisis ever occur, the advantage of being near the river as a means of escape.

The bustle and excitement antecedent to their departure from Bristol, which had prevented the minds of Lomax and his wife from adapting themselves to their new position in society, or feeling the full and permanent effects of their crime, continued, with similar results, for some little while after their arrival at their new residence.

We have already noticed that the sudden enrichment of the former had rendered him so covetous that he had grudged the donation to his brother executor, and still more the disadvantageous settlement with Vandermeulen, a sacrifice to which he had only been induced to consent by his habitual deference to his wife. Cupidity, however, proceeds as often from pro-

for ever from his grasp. This epicurean ea ness was but a modification of the reckless spair which sometimes urges the shipwre sailor to stave the liquor-casks, and to rev intoxication, ere he is irrevocably whelms the remorseless deep; although, in the cas Lomax, it developed itself in a calm and tained system, instead of a frantic aban ment.

Under the influence of these feelings, drawing and dining rooms of Cypress H were painted in gaudy colours, decorated gilt mouldings and panels, and encumb with sumptuous furniture, which, if it did attest the good taste, at least indicated wealth, of its proprietor. In every part o establishment a similar character was re nizable. That Lomax, who had never to his genealogy farther back than his grandfa where all researches were lost in the dark of antiquity, should affect heraldic hor

The narrow circumstances in which Lonax had recently lived, so far from having extinguished that sensuality which was inherent in his nature, had only whetted his appetite for its indulgence, and he seemed resolved to make quick and ample atonement for the compulsory self-denial to which he had so long been subjected. A professed cook was engaged, with orders to send up a handsome and elaborate dinner every day, and a stock of rare and costly wines was deposited in the spacious cellarage of the old mansion, the master of which, in laving down his scheme of life, appeared to have perpetually whispered to himself, not perhaps without some secret misgiving as to the possible consequences of his crime: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Beyond this coarse ostentation and vulgar sensuality, his soul, even had he possessed the wealth of the Indies, would never have aspired.

about in his pony-chaise, followed by a servant mounted upon a tall coach horse. Upon one point she was not proof against the aggrandizement of her husband. He was the only gentleman, as it is termed, that is to say, the only idler, the only useless person, in the immediate neighbourhood. This was a pitiful object of ambition for so vigorous an intellect: but stronger minds than her's have been deluded by the fancied gentility of inoccupation, a distinction which very often contributes little to the respectability, and less to the happiness, of its possessor. The glorious privilege "of being master of one's own time" is but a sad and barren honour, if it makes its wearer a slave to himself and the victim of ennui. They who have been born and bred to constant employment are very apt to make the discovery that idleness is an oppressive task-master to all those who have not served it by a regular apprenticeship, and become accustomed to its sway.

that used to preserve her from greater evil, the tedium of life; and more wistfully for the clear conscien once proved her shield against sel Neither her health nor her spirits against this constant corrosion, whi more wasting because she refused it a tear or a complaint; and the dis heart-withered Mrs. Lomax would into utter dejection but for her son. Heaven," she would sometimes ejacu having gazed upon his amended looks animated countenance, until tears a suffused her eyes — "thank Heaven is better; he is evidently recovering

enjoy existence and prosperity for

that he was constitutionally religious, a tendency which, being hardly natural in one so young, had been ascribed by some to a morbid sympathy with his debilitated frame. does not, however, appear to have been the case, for, his devotion gathering strength with his body, became more fervent and intense as he exhibited symptoms of convalescence. But, let us not be misunderstood. His was not the religion of controversial divinity, or of creeds, forms, and dogmas; that would, indeed, have been unnatural in a youth of fifteen - but of love. He was truly a creature of love. His yearning heart sought to evince its gratitude to Heaven for the blessings showered upon his family, and for his own apparent convalescence, by suffering its affections to overflow upon all animated beings.

In his charitable visits to the poor, he was often accompanied by his sister, whom we feel that we ought to have introduced to our reader

almost rival that of the mother, should a worthy cause call for its exertion, they were accompanied by a clear manifestation of all the gentler and more feminine virtues, a winning affectionate tone of voice, and a suavity of countenance, to which Mrs. Lomax could make but small pretension. Although her hair approached to the dark hue of the mother's, and the fringe of her eyelashes was quite black, her complexion, only less delicate than that of her sickly brother, was fair and transparent. From the peculiar expression of the eyebrows, and the seriousness of the mouth, she wore, when quiescent, a slightly melancholy look, which was succeeded by a smile of the most endearing benignity, the moment she began to speak, or was addressed by another. She did not strike at first sight; she did not sparkle, she did not fascinate; but, her winning loveliness, growing upon the affections of the spectator, was felt the more thrillingly, because she herself seemed his talents—for there had always been a morbid precocity in his intellect — and his singular beauty, entitled him, as she imagined, to the exclusive attachment and admiration of all who knew him; and, being never so happy as when she was testifying her own sense of his superiority, she was rather gratified than hurt when in this respect she was imitated by her parents or her friends. Their lowly condition at Bristol she had regretted only as it diminished the indulgences rendered almost indispensable by the delicate health of her brother; and now she rejoiced in their sudden and unexpected elevation, rather upon his account than her own.

Mary, nevertheless, was no faultless monster; we have not the smallest wish to raise her above the failings and feelings, we will not say of her sex, of which it is our pride never to have spoken disparagingly, but of our common nature. The comparative splendour with which she was surrounded at Cypress House, the rich

cerned, the unobtruding but observant anc penetrative eye of Mary had latterly discoveres unequivocal symptoms of a diminution rathe than an increase of happiness from their ag -Her father, indeed, derivegrandizement. evident, and, as it appeared to her, an almosunworthy gratification from the pleasures othe table, to which he devoted himself with sensual abandonment that absorbed a grea. portion of his time and the whole of his faculties, though these, it must be confessed, were never of a very aspiring order. With him the dinner of the day was the chief study of the day; its preparation and demolition became serious affairs; and his indulgence in the bottle, now frequently continued, even when quite alone, to a late hour, did not always stop short of excess. But, to his anxious daughter, it seemed that he betook himself to these gross enjoyments, less from positive epicurism than in the hope of escaping from some secret grief

with a shorter and more convenient access to the river, he had caused an opening to be made, and a strong door to be inserted, in the extreme corner of the garden wall; but, in these broken ejaculations, which his daughter, however, unintentionally, was sometimes compelled to overhear, she could not but suspect the alteration to have been made with a different motive, from the often-repeated phrase of "Escape by the new door—on board ship—sail to America—ha!"

From these evidences of a perturbed spirit, Mary, who had noticed them with the most painful solicitude, came to the conclusion that he was a prey to some stifled wretchedness, or living in the apprehension of some imminent calamity, of the nature of which she could not even form a conjecture. As to the possibility of his being harassed by remorse for any heinous crime, it was a supposition that never entered her innocent and unsuspicious

She had become much more silent than before, sitting often and for a length of time in gloomy communion with her own secret thoughts; her temper, hitherto rendered remarkably equable by the strength and fortitude of her mind, was now often morose or impetuous, particularly towards her husband, whom she rebuked with an unmeasured scorn, whenever he gave way to fits of despondency, muttered to himself, or betrayed any unfounded alarm. these latter occasions her own countenance would assume a look of desperate defiance, and indeed she seemed prepared to make war upon the whole world, or at least to defend herself to the last against its attacks, for she caused additional barricades to be put to the doors, invariably examined them herself before she retired to rest, and always kept loaded pistols by her bed-side, assigning as a reason for these precautions that the neighbourhood was not a particularly safe one, and that their plate and thizing with the sorrows of her parents, althou she could not divine their source, already beg to doubt whether the change in their circu stances which had wrought this ominous eff upon their feelings might not be rather deem a misfortune than a blessing. ability by the external manifestations of wealth, and coveted a man's acquaintance with an avidity pretty accurately proportioned to the number of the carriages and the horses that he kept, and the taxes that he paid, eagerly sought admission to Cypress House, without staying to inquire whether their new neighbours were likely to prove pleasant or desirable acquaintance. Many circumstances concurred to quicken their advances.

It seemed very mysterious that a perfect stranger, not engaged in any business, and having no connexions in the vicinity, should plant himself in a situation which presented but few attractions to a man of fortune, who had all the world before him in selecting his place of residence. He could not be an adventurer seeking to obtain credit in order that he might decamp, for his house was his own, and he paid ready money for every thing; nor could concealment be his object, since he as-

sumption in the over-finery of Lomax's house and equipage, which the men attributed to the vulgar taste of the wife, and the women, for there is a strong esprit de corps in the sexes, to the same defect in the husband; but all admitted that, in their personal demeanour, the new-comers were plain, unpretending people, who appeared to have sprung from the same class as their neighbours, and consequently were not likely to repel their advances, or to mortify their feelings by any affected airs of superiority.

With these various motives to draw them together, the tenants of Cypress House were soon upon visiting terms with a little circle in the vicinity, while they formed a close intimacy with two or three families, one of which we shall forthwith introduce to our readers.

Jacob Bryant, a substantial wharfinger, and owner of a stout brig called the Charming Kitty, was a short, thickset, person, whose ruand important air as he sat in his balcony of a summer evening, smoking his pipe, or paced the flag-stones with which the wharf was bordered, gazing at the vessels as they worked up the Pool, that he had an abundant consciousness of his own independence.

Of his wife, a vulgar woman, who piqued herself upon her good taste and her gentility, we shall say little at present, in order that we may introduce the reader to his niece, Helen Owen. This good-looking, good-tempered, kind-hearted, lively girl, having been left an orphan a few years after she quitted school, with a handsome fortune in money, besides other property, had been invited by her uncle, who had been named her guardian, to take up her residence at Eagle Wharf, in the secret hope, for the good man was a shrewd calculator, that she might be ultimately secured as a wife by his son Ambrose.

Young as she was, Helen, who had received

But before she agreed to fix herself at a inviting a spot as Eagle Wharf, she mad condition which would have reconciled h almost any abode, in stipulating that she sl be accompanied by Rose Mayhew, a g nearly the same age as herself, who had her bosom-friend at school, and had quit at the same time. Within three months o period, Rose, also, was left an orphan, wi any relations who could assist her, and a without a guinea; under which distressing cumstances she was about to accept a situ as governess, when Helen Owen, then res at a distance, accidentally learnt her intenand, hurrying to her lodgings, accompanie her father, pressed her, with the most tionate earnestness, to accept an asylu their house, an offer to which the timic almost broken-hearted orphan, who was fitted to encounter the storms of adversity sented with tears of gratitude.

Now I want you to refute this libel, and to attest the sincerity of your friendship by accompanying me in my dreary pilgrimage to Eagle Wharf, and the unromantic purlieus of Horsleydown."

"Dearest Helen," cried her friend, pressing her affectionately to her bosom, while her face was suffused with emotion, "I see all the kindness of your heart, all the refined generosity that veils itself in the disguise of an earnest supplication. I wish not to be a burthen to any one, but Heaven knows that the very thought of our separation is almost insupportable. I desire no better fate than to live and die with you."

"Nay, nay, not so fast, my little enthusiast. There is time enough to talk of dying, and, before you even decide upon living with me, I wish you to weigh the full extent of the sacrifice you will be called upon to make. A region

ment with which not even marriage shall interfere. If I am the first to enter into the hole state of matrimony, you shall continue to be my companion, until some discerning suitor petitions for your hand. If you are the first to be led to the Hymeneal altar — that, I believe, is the established newspaper phrase —I shall still inflict myself upon you, until some haplesse victim releases you, and fetters himself, by claiming me as his cara sposa."

"My marriage," sighed Rose, "is an alter—native little likely to occur, for who would select for his wife a timid, helpless, inexperi—enced girl without a shilling?"

"Not a fool, perhaps, nor a worldling; but the man of sense, whom you are the most likely to love you. You are a treasure in yourself, my dear-Rose, though you do not know it; but why do you tremble thus, and why are those bright eyes still dim with tears? You must not give

To account for the warmth and the firmnes of Helen's attachment, we must state that Rose Mayhew was one of those fascinating confiding, endearing, sylph-like creature whom it is almost impossible not to love. He clear, olive-coloured skin, with the polish ( marble, was as soft as satin, and almost a transparent as amber; its whole surface be coming instantly suffused by every passin emotion that quickened the circulation of th blood beneath, while her extreme sensitivenes gave an incessant play and animation to he countenance. Dark, unconfined, and natural curling, her profuse locks were so apt to f over her face, that she had acquired the hs of frequently shaking them back, disclos for a minute or two her high and ample f head; but it was difficult to admire as deserved her round, earnest-looking, hazel because they were instantly bent down with the bashfulness of girlhood wheneve

she excited. Upon these occasions she would start away from the piano, hurry into a corner, cross her hands upon her bosom, and suffer her ringlets to fall over her blushing cheeks, with a girlish, trembling, bashfulness that had often been mistaken for affectation, a failing from which few persons were so perfectly free as Rose Mayhew. Not content with this unmerited imputation, some of her schoolfellows had bestowed upon her the nickname of the inspired idiot, her diffidence and timorousness being of such an extreme and morbid character that, when noticed, she would sometimes be completely overcome with confusion, when she would hesitate, stammer, and talk as incoherently, as if smitten by a temporary fatuity.

Of Bryant's son Ambrose, who was now abroad in the command of the Charming Kitty, we need not give any present account; but we must not pass over his head-clerk and

some degree of composure, and then sto to Eagle Wharf, to ask the advice and ance of Mrs. Bryant, to whom she v tantly related.

All mention of the gaming-house been suppressed by the prudent mother Bryant, after inveighing against the faimprovidence of young men, and the tendency of speculations, agreed to conhusband as to what was best to be do Jacob, who was a kind-hearted man want of a confidential assistant, conreceive young Hunter in that capacit

Delighted at the thought of beir to support his mother and sister, i humble a manner, Hunter accepted tion, although he knew it to be on both by education and taste, he wa qualified. Never, perhaps, had i been more signally misplaced. As petuous in his temperament, for

ment, but for the intercessions and apo of his mother, and the good nature of Bi who was induced to overlook his repeated cadilloes of this nature out of consider for his family. Although the wharfings no very high opinion of his clerk's abiliti of his capacity for ever becoming a musiness, he could place implicit confider his integrity, which formed an additionative for retaining him in his employment pecially when combined with the recoll that, if he dismissed him, he would probal called upon to support his family, who hother means of maintaining themselves.

"Well, dear Rose!" cried Helen Ov her friend, on their first instalment in the abode, "what think you of Eagle Whar its uncouth-looking inmates? Pray speal mind freely; I give you a carte blanche to them as much as you please. If they strangers, I should not be so liberal, but average of his class, or affect, by some silly pretensions, to set himself above it; a failing of which I could see nothing whatever in Mr. Bryant, and a good deal in his wife. Her expensive dress, so much too fine for the occasion, that patronizing air which coarse minds mistake for condescension, and her repeated declaration that she piqued herself upon her taste and her gentility, sufficiently convince me that she has but slender pretensions to either."

"Ah, my poor aunt! you have let her off too cheap, but I have a regard for her, nevertheless; and so we will enter into a compact never to compete with her in talking of her gentility and her taste. We must believe in them as we do in ghosts, without seeing them. But what say you to our locale, and how, think you, shall you like a wharf for your residence?"

"At all events, it is not so noisy as I had expected."

"Nay, but we are not altogether wi them. We have half a dozen cranes, s mestic that they never move from the house, though I will not answer for your I their voices, especially when they lack Then there is the large gilt eagle of the which occasionally creaks and screams as were crying out for food. And, finally, o all-important day when my uncle give annual dinner to the Prime and Warde the Fishmongers' Company, the Wha visited by a fine lively turtle, not of the cosort, but of that more interesting species vyields the precious green fat."

"Nay, if you run on at this rate, dear H you will soon furnish forth an inanimate as At all events, your fine spirits have not hit suffered by the change."

"Heaven forefend that they should! for take my life when you take the means who I live. I suppose, however, they will rise

"Interesting! that term is so universally bestowed upon man, woman, and child, when no more definite eulogy can be applied, that I consider it a disparagement rather than a praise. I hate an interesting voung man, I am not quite sure that I like a modest-alias, a sheepfaced one - and as to the reserve for which you give credit to this grave-looking wielder of the quill, it is nothing in the world but pride. It is not want of self-possession, for his deportment is unembarrassed enough, nor the diffidence of one who fears that he is beneath his company, but rather the cold distance of a man who fancies himself superior to his associates, and is ashamed of his situation. The young hero is a decayed gentleman, it seems. Did you observe how his cheeks reddened, and his eyes flashed, when uncle reminded him that he had twice omitted to call at the Custom House, and told him that his He has a very picturesque head, and his eyes are the most expressive I ever saw."

"Why the man's a man, as Volante says but the fact is that I think nobody good-looking who wears a woe-begone countenance. I have a natural, perhaps I should rather say an unnatural, or at least an unfeeling, antipathy to the tristful and dolorous."

"Not unfeeling, dearest Helen; for oh! how tenderly have you loved and comforted me when I was unhappy!"

"But I positively doat upon you when you are cheerful; so prithee do not sympathise so far with this grave, but not very reverend signor, as to acquire his lackadaisical look."

There was a pause of some minutes, when Rose, who seemed to be interested in the subject upon which they had been discoursing; recurred to it by saying, "Surely, Helen, you will not deny that he was well dressed."

"I did not notice him so narrowly a:

## CHAPTER IX.

"These spirits of sense, in fantasy's high court,
Judge of the forms of objects, ill or well;
And so do they send a good or ill report
Down to the heart, where all affections dwell."

ALTHOUGH Helen was not sincere in here sure of Alfred Hunter, she had accidentally stabled upon the truth when she affirmed that reserve proceeded from pride rather than didence. An anxiety to avoid altercation with I Bryant, for he felt the imprudence of alienat his only friend, led him to take refuge in habitual silence, sometimes so strictly, we I almost said so sullenly, preserved as to scarcely less offensive than the petulance which it was substituted. In this, as in otl matters, his hasty feelings and rash judgment I

lect or incompetency; too poor to be a g man, and too proud to submit with a grace to poverty, his life was a conflict of posite feelings, and his character an ap anomaly.

Although he had at first exhibited a d almost a haughty, reserve towards the n mates, anticipating that they would prov gling girls, who would look down up humble clerk with something like conor who would at all events think they con an honour in noticing him, his coldness r wore off when he found that they no comported themselves towards him with a affability, but even seemed to seek occ for treating him with a marked respect. jealousy which anticipates and resent superiority of another, even though it I manifested, and which in the victims of fortune is so apt to degenerate into an ur pride, now melted away like snow before straint of one who, not feeling quite sure
his position, fears to make or even to recipr
cate, any advances towards familiarity.

With Rose Mayhew, however, he felt himself on a footing of comparative case and inti-imacy. There was something so winning 3.1 her retiring girlishness, and beautiful confusioza; her manner, when she addressed him, was so gentle, gracious, and confiding; and her views and opinions, when he could succeed in drawing them out, were so much in unison with his own, that he quickly found a charm in her society which tended more to reconcile him to his situation than all the considerations of prudence and duty. Even Eagle Wharf, with its vulgar and revolting accessories, was rendered more endurable to him by some remarks which she dropped, perhaps with that benevolent object, on his expressing an apprehension that so ardent an admirer of nature and of the picturesque as Miss Mayhew could find very little

the medium of communication between the modistant nations, and consequently as one of the great civilizers of the world: as a silent, dust-less road, which, regularly rising and falling, flowing backwards and forwards, receives no reparation, and yet remains for ever the same; a road so soft that we can plunge our bodies into its depths, and over which, nevertheless, weights that would crush a solid rock are drawn by the winged coursers of the air, or impelled at full speed by an impalpable vapour."

"When you have fairly thrown the reins upon the neck of your imagination," cried Helen, "I know by experience that we have nothing to do but to let you gallop away until you are out of breath."

"May I beseech you not to interrupt year friend?" whispered Hunter, impatiently, "for methinks I already begin to look upon this turbid stream with a reverence to which I have hitherto been a stranger."

flected the gay banner, and echoed to the me music of the laughing water-party, while oth may yet be warm with the last breath or to convulsive clutch of the drowning suicide."

The enthusiast paused—but her auditors, both of whom were now equally averse from turning the flow of her ideas by a comment, remained gazing at her without speaking, a silence which seemed suddenly to have brought her to herself, for she started, coloured deeply, and exclaimed, in an altered voice, "Good Heavens! how have I been babbling! I fear I have uttered a sad rhapsody. I was scarcely aware that—Helen, Helen! why, why did you not check me! The river—did I wander? what river?—Who talked of a drowned suicide?—How could I be so silly?"

Her confusion becoming increased by her nervous anxiety to escape from it, she continued to ejaculate in a still more incoherent strain, until she suddenly paused, shook her profuse leafy bower. "Unkind Helen!" she continued, recovering herself, "how could you see my Pegasus running away with me, and not make a single snatch at his bridle?" On perceiving their companions, of whose presence she seemed for the moment to have been unaware, her eyes were instantly bent to the ground—she clasped her hands together, exclaiming in a soft supplicating tone, while a thousand blushing apparitions suffused her face and bosom, "Pray, pray forgive me, Mr. Hunter, I quite forgot myself," and, so saying, she vanished from the room like a flying sylph.

"What a beautiful, what a gifted creature!" cried Hunter, in an impassioned voice. "She has all the loveliness, and more than all the talent, of a Grecian Pythoness, for her's is the inspiration of genius."

"She is indeed a most extraordinary girl," said Helen; "but though I admire, I am not quite sure that I like these enthusiastic day-dreams.

Here's an order from Higgins and Spratt for the twenty-two casks of tallow, and you m 12st see them weighed and delivered immediately."

"So ends my pleasant dream," muttered the clerk between his clenched teeth; "and now for the hateful, the disgusting realities of Eagle Wharf. I am a clerk, a servant, a slave, and must resume my drudgery at the bidding of the overseer."

So saying, he betook himself to the warehouse, where, with au indignant heart, and looks that betrayed his aversion, he performed his distasteful task. If he discharged it without making any mistakes, it must be attributed to chance rather than to the sedulity of his attention, since his thoughts, during the whole process, were with Rose Mayhew, a direction from which they rarely deviated for several following days, although in that period he saw very little of the object that engrossed them. The timid girl, imagining that she had not maintained a

## CHAPTER X.

The same Office and the same of

"We're both love's captives, but with fate so cross.

One must be happy by the other's loss."

SHARAFEALL-

No man who has once had a reputation for cleverness forgets to fancy himself as vigorous as ever in his intellect; and no *çi-devant* Belle either loves the recollection of her former beauty, or can be brought to believe that she has quite survived it. In this latter category must be placed Mrs. Bryant, who, having once possessed the complexional red and white of a milkmaid, with a crumby figure to match, had been thought good-looking, and still considered herself in that predicament, although her frame had assumed a shapeless rotundity, and her

such an egident look of discomposure that Helen immediately inquired its cause.

"Why, my dear," was the reply, "it's only the old story, and yet I cannot help being vexed at it. Mr. B., he has been complaining again of Mr. Hunter for inattention and forgetfulness, and what not, and, as I know he keeps him solely out of regard to me, though he can hardly be called a relation of mine, only a very distant connexion, and I have persuaded him to overlook many things done by him, or omitted to be done, which is all the same, yet he and him are always a-bickering, which is particular unpleasant, and I must say the young man does not by any means treat him with proper respect."

Knowing that her aunt entertained too good an opinion of herself to suspect any one of quizzing her, Helen would sometimes venture on such an open strain of banter, that her timid friend sate upon tenterhooks in the apprehenday that he had more pride than prudence, he reddened like a turkey cock, and, drawing himself bolt upright, 'Sir,' says he, 'a proper pride,' says he, 'is the only thing of which fortune has been unable to deprive me, and I value it accordingly,' says he. Now, that's what I call impertinence.'

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"And that is what I call a becoming dignity," thought Rose, whose dependent situation, coupled with the recollection of her former prospects, enabled her fully to sympathize with the party inculpated.

"And to speak in that swaggering way to my husband," resumed the wife, "who is not only his employer, and indeed his master, if you come to that, but who could buy half the neighbourhood out and out, that is, if they were all to pay their debts. I scorn to boast of Mr. B.'s property, and indeed I need in't, for his business and his buildings speak for themselves; but, when a man's money proves

matters, that most people of good taste have a good temper, and upon this principle your kindness might be pushed to a fault. By the bye, I see you have got a new bonnet, and I never beheld a more elegant one; it is quite a darling, so simple, so neat, and so becoming, too. This sunflower and the crimson paeony make such a sweet contrast, and this love of a blue hollyhock running up between them! Look, Rose, did you ever see such a perfect bijou?".

The party thus appealed to scarcely knew which way to turn her eyes, for she expected every moment that the aunt would detect and resent the ridicule of this pretended admiration; she forced herself, however, to give a faint acquiescence, and Mrs. Bryant replied with a bridling complacency:—"Why, taste, you see, is a gift, and comes natural like. I was always remarkable for it, without taking any trouble to acquire it; and, as to this bonnet, I must say I think it particular genteel."

to broad and barefaced raillery, or it will get you some day into a sad scrape."

"Broad and barefaced was it? then it was appropriate, for it was like the object to whom it was addressed. Besides, the end sanctifies the means. What would have become of poor Mrs. Hunter and her daughter, if her son had been dismissed from an employment which constitutes their sole support? To propitiate my aunt, and secure her interference, I was obliged to play upon her foibles, and who would not have done the same in the cause of humanity, to say nothing of the amusement to ourselves?"

"Nay, I approve of your object, and do justice to your motives. I was only fearful of her discovering your mockery. I am glad you prevailed upon her to interfere, for it would be shocking that poor Mrs. Hunter and her daughter should be exposed to want."

"That was my feeling, and I am glad to find

chance of which reward she would prolong he sitting with all the exemplary patience of arm angler, waiting a whole morning for a nibble.

Latterly, these aquatic offerings of persona admiration had been transferred to the smart new bonnet, or the showy pelisse, not always unaccompanied by remarks, in which she had more than once caught the objectionable wor d "vulgar;" but, as she attributed all such = the inapplicable terms to ignorance and want taste, she retained her seat, in the hope eliciting a more acceptable homage from mo discerning passengers. As her present bonnet was equally well calculated to catch the eyes, and suit the taste of nautical critics, it had received its due meed of praise from two bo companies, in the course of half an hour, success which rendered her insensible to the lapse of time, and restored her to her your friends, when she was summoned to join the in a mood of more than ordinary graciousness Mrs. Hunter, and I am glad I thought of calling on her, for she is really a very good sort of woman, and, as I told you, was once in better circumstances, which accounts for her being sort of connexion of mine. She is a kindhearted, simple-minded body, and would reallybe a pleasant companion enough, if she did not always appear to be thinking of some household trifles in the midst of every conversation, however serious. She will be glad to learn, poor thing! that all differences between her some and Mr. B. are once more made up, for she knows that they are all completely dependent on my husband, as I have indeed more than = once reminded the young man of, though I 3 always did it with delicacy, for, though one = does happen to be superior to others in point of fortune, I don't think it by any means particular genteel to boast of it."

"From that proposition few will dissent," said Helen; "I have always considered purse-

without information, there was at air of perfect remained, but interest in consistent approach to degrate about the partitur, that assonished both filters and filter. Mrs. Harner, an amiable-limiting person, whose prematurely grizzled her was mained in brails by a close cap that seemed to have just belt the starcher's hand, and whose whole incre exhibited a quaker-like neatness, received her visitants with a well-bred case, and introduced to Helen and Rose her daughter Harriet, whose dejected appearance in spite of the faint smile with which she greeted them, justified Mrs. Bryant's description.

The poor girl had experienced a disappointment in her affections, which might well account for this habitual pensiveness. The object of her attachment, who had no fault but his poverty, was to have purchased a partnership with her small marriage portion; but, when the brother's unfortunate speculations incapa-

ther Mrs. Because and introduced her comparations to name, untiling in a wissper that her more was an increase, who had come to live with them, and the other a poor friend entirely expendent upon her, she continued in a tone or condemension, which had the effect of impertinence without meaning it. "Well, to be sure, Mrs. Hunter, how tidy and comfortable every thing looks, and so it always does when I come here. I declare I don't see but whan people in ever so small lodgings, even over a shop, and without hardly a guinea in their pockets, may make themselves as happy, if tunate not to have any disagreeables or nuisances; for, though it's a dyer's, we seldom have any very bad smells, and we are never annoyed by the soap-boilers at No. 10, except when the wind's in the west; and, as to the noise of the linseed-mills, I have got so used to it, that I scarcely hear it. We have much to be thankful for, and I hope we both feel ——. La! here's my thimble after all in the nutmeggrater! What a hunt I have had for it, to be sure!"

"How soon one may get reconciled to things," said Mrs. Bryant; "but, after all, people must cut their coat according to their cloth."

"Very true," resumed Mrs. Hunter; "and exposed as we all are to the vicissitudes of life, we cannot be too grateful, however small may be the portion of cloth that is left to us. Wella-a-day! we live in a strange world, but we must all look forward to ——, Harriet! don't

you hear the cry? Run and tell Sarah to buy

a Pennyworth of cat's-meat for dear Tabby."

Blushing at her mother's indecorous peroration, Harriet hastened to obey the mandate;
Rose, straid to look her friend in the face, lest
abeshould be provoked to sympathetic laughter,
kept her eyes fixed upon the floor; and Helen,
who always found it difficult to conceal her
sense of the ludicrous, started from her chair,
and began to examine one of the framed drawings with great apparent attention, an act
which only drew upon her the notice that she
meant to elude.

"That is painted by my dear Alfred," said the proud mother; "is it not beautiful? He was considered an excellent amateur artist before our circumstances altered; but he has no time, now, poor fellows for any such amusements."

Helen summoned Rose to look at the drawing, which was seedly a superior performance,



when both expressed their admiration in warm terms that Mrs. Bryant joined t and, after peering at it for a moment, claimed:—"A very pretty landscape, I declare, but I always regret when I see a pai windmill, that they can't make the sail round, it would look so much more nat like, would n't it, now? I had no idea Hunter could draw so well, for he do n't a particular good hand."

"Perhaps you are not aware," added mother, "that he sings very prettily. He had little or no instruction, but he is alle to have a very good bass voice."

"Well, now, that's rather odd, is n't it he do n't speak particular gruff."

"I am very glad we have discovered accomplishment," said Helen; "I have ordered a piano, and, as my friend, Miss I hew, is an excellent vocalist, we shall, perh prevail on Mr. Hunter to accompany her.'

shall deget my own name next—if you did be know how good these dear children are to me how they are perpetually thinking of me; he they watch night and day; how they study how they—my heart's so full that I can hard—and indeed what could I do to reward then but I gray to Heaven every night that——.

The fond mother, whose voice had been gradually breaking, strove in vain to complete a sentence: her nostrils dilated, her eyes glatened, and she would, doubtless, have meltinto tears, but that, as her looks fell upon a window, a sudden turn was given to her rabling thoughts, and, after a moment's delishe exclaimed in her usual tone:—"What fine donkey! and what a shame for that boy beat it so!"

By tapping at the window, holding up he finger, and shaking her head at the offends she procured a momentary cessation of blows, when she resumed, "I cannot bear

Harriet, "I must say that it seldom smoke except when we have visitants. Never E I so much regret its rudeness as at the presement, since you might, perhaps, have plonged your stay had it been upon its good haviour."

Helen and Rose, to whom these words waldressed, declared that they should be lighted to renew their visit at an early per expressing a hope at the same time that has Hunter would frequently favour them with call at Eagle Wharf. "My dearest Rose Meaux!" cried the former, when they was once more in the street, "methinks you largive me credit for the humility of the comparison—bear a close resemblance to the far famed butcher, who instituted such a diligend search for the very knife which he held in his mouth, since we have been searching the neighbourhood for pleasant society, without being aware that we had a Phœnix, a nonsuch, ar

is either irritable and proud, or silent as sullen."

"He may be good-natured without being good-tempered," whispered Helen to Rose "though I can fancy him to be both when he is at home, in his own element, and neithe when he breathes the uncongenial atmospher of the Wharf; uncongenial, I mean, when a are not there."

"It must be so," replied her friend: "hodelightful is it to contemplate a family in whice there reigns such a perfect harmony of tast and feeling! Even about the old lady, in spit of her awkward contretemps, and her sudde: episodes àpropos to nothing, there is a certain air which raises her above her sphere, and compels you to respect even while you smile a her. Did you ever observe what a moral dignity, quite independent of station, is imparted by the affections and the virtues? Nay, I have sometimes thought that their possessors gene-

and turn-out acquaintance. Mr. B. can\* bear it: he wouldn't give a farthing for an acquaintance without a good spread, and prime old port, and the best of every thing. gives it himself, you see, and, therefore, he has a right to look for it in others. Makeshifts and substitutes he can't abide; he calls it swindling. We are going now to the Lomaxes at Cypress House, the family you have heard so much about. and who, as I am informed, give capital dinners of three courses, with real champagne and plate in the handsomest style imaginable. There are inuendoes circulating against them, but they deserve no attention, for, people living in this way, and keeping carriages and horses, cannot be otherwise than perfectly respectable; and all the insinuations, I find, come from those that cannot get invited to partake of their good cheer,"

"Let me congratulate you, my sweet little Rose de Meaux," cried Helen, as they returned from their visit to Cypress House. "You seem "I ought not to laugh at you," said Helem"
"for I, too, little subject as I am to any em
thusiastic surprises, have been fascinated be
his sister, more than I can well express to you
Placid without being inanimate, sedate and ye
not grave, Mary Lomax seems to unite high
principles and great strength of character with
an affectionate heart and varied powers of
amusement. In short, I am delighted with
her, and felt more than once tempted to exclaim,
in the language of the mock German play, 'A
sudden thought strikes me; let us swear an
eternal friendship.'"

- "Who is enthusiastic, now, Helen?"
- "I plead guilty; I have been as much smitten as yourself: I have fallen in love at first sight."
  - "To that charge I do not plead guilty."
- "Well, then, the young gentleman has fallen in love with you."
  - "I could almost stake my existence that not

## CHAPTER XI.

"You plead each other's cause. What witness h Ourselves and Heaven.

Guilt witnesses for guilt! Hence love and friend You have no longer place in human breasts."

ALL I

It had been agreed between Mr. an Lomax that, to avoid all unnecessary per should converse as little as possible up subject of the fabricated will; but it was much easier to make this stipulation to observe it. That which was ever upp in their waking thoughts, and not seldo sented to them in the appalling visions night, it was impossible to banish alt from their lips, at least from those of the

his fantastical panics, and general imbecilit of mind and purpose, which became every da more conspicuous, fretted her temper, ar added to the depression of her spirits.

If the newspapers contained any intelligence from South America, he would shake like a aspen leaf, and express a hundred vague and foolish misgivings as to the return of Edward Ruddock: every vessel that he saw passing up the river was converted by his guilty conscience into an arrival from that quarter, bringing the rightful heir, to expose and punish the usurper of his inheritance: and every letter, of which he did not recognize the writing in the address was opened with trembling hands, lest it should come from the same dreaded individual, or from some law-agent, announcing his intention the dispute the validity of the will.

But the terrors and visions of the day wer as nothing compared to the phantasmagoria o his sleeping hours, when the nightmare be

than be the slave of its dastard fictions. Expose me not to catch the infection of you terror; to live in constant dread is to realize nay, to exceed, its worst apprehensions: deat is a thousand times preferable to such a miserable and contemptible existence."

"Ah, Jane, Jane!" would the unhapp man reply; "if this be true, as to my con I know it to be, surely I deserve your compassion, rather than upbraidings and revisings. You are the last that should taunt m with my wretchedness. Who entailed it upc me? Who tempted me to commit the crim which ——?"

"She who lifted you out of the mire poverty and contempt," interposed the will with a disdainful look. "She who redeems you from a worse than Egyptian bondage ar dependence, and made you a gentleman, station, at least, if not in soul: she who surounded you with the respect and homage the

and terror. The arch-enemy of mankind, who,

"wiser than before, Now tempts by making rich, not making poor,"

had, indeed, succeeded in destroying the happiness as well as the innocence of this ill-fated, though seemingly prosperous, couple. In all their former trials, which had been neither few nor light, they had derived consolation and support from an unaccusing conscience, as well as from their mutual accordance and affection. Yielding a willing submission to the stronger mind of his wife, the husband had found in her talents and energy not only a source of pride, but a stimulus of attachment; while his spouse, whose disposition was somewhat imperious, became reconciled to the comparative imbecility of her partner, in consideration of the undisputed ascendency which it enabled her to exercise.

As there are discords in music which con-

riage up to the fatal moment when she are ceived the project of forging the will, conduct of Mrs. Lomax had been so free for reproach, that her husband had reverenced principles, not less than he admired her ger powers of mind. But this foundation or regard and esteem she herself had for eve away, and he began to look upon her first indifference, and then with a concealed sion, as the insidious tempter, whose min menaces and blandishments had placed his body and soul in the most perilous pre ment, and had entailed upon him all those rors and miseries by which he was incess beleaguered.

Nor could be retain his habitual defe even for her intellectual superiority, who had lost the sense of her moral worth, and ceived that in perpetrating a crime she committed a grievous and irretrievable mis Not only did he now presume to argue size size held it at the will of one whom she we keem to hate as much as she had ever despecial and whose new-born insolence o: ◄ name: six sometimes checked with overvacuum ridicule, and sometimes with the nest withering contempt. It was a consolations we are a time to could not well endanger her steer #112011 compromising his own; she retherein moreover, that he was in her power ass mach as sile was in his; but the moody and respected courses thus suggested to her were rescribed by the recollection that neither party. sould squite the other without drawing downdisgrace and misery, aggravated perhaps by all the evils of poverty, upon her darling Benamin.

Upon Lomax himself, who was equally attached to both his children, while he trembled at the thought of exposure, and the loss of the luxuries to which he was devoted, this consideration operated with an influence so potent, every gesture may be traced a consciousness of his new importance; he carries himself erect, plants his foot upon the ground with a firm step, and looks down upon those to whom he formerly looked up, either with an impertinent air of condescension, or with that arrogant assumption, which nothing but the pride of purse can engender, and none but an ignoble spirit can display. In his sanguine moods, for even the timid Lomax was occasionally confident and overweening, he would exhibit both these varieties of deportment; but a single marked or scrutinizing glance from a passenger, an unexpected allusion to arrivals from South America, and, above all, the approach of any tall thin man in a low-crowned hat, for with this spectre his mind was ever haunted, would instantly humble his pride, and fill him with terrors, which as quickly manifested themselves in his averted and downcast eyes, his crouching shoulders, as if he would shrink within him-

JANE LONAX. very gesture may be traced a consciousness of his new importance; he carries himself erect, plants his foot upon the ground with a firm step, and looks down upon those to whom he formerly looked up, either with an impertinent air of condescension, or with that arrogant assumption, which nothing but the pride of purse can engender, and none but an ignoble spirit can display. In his sanguine moods, for even the timid Lomax was occasionally confident and overweening, he would exhibit both these varieties of deportment; but a single marked or scrutinizing glance from a passenger, an unexpected allusion to arrivals from South America, and, above all, the approach of any tall thin man in a low-crowned hat, for with thi spectre his mind was ever haunted, would is stantly humble his pride, and fill him with t rors, which as quickly manifested themse in his averted and downcast eyes, his crouc shoulders, as if he would shrink within

and the accelerated step with which he sked away from the object of his alarm.

Among the eccentric habits generated by the Porbid state of his mind, it was his frequent custom, whatever might be the weather, to take boat in the afternoon, disembark in Thames Street, and walk to the Bank, which he would Perambulate round and round, for one or two bours, muttering to himself the amount of the different stocks that stood in his name. It was a solace to his feelings thus to find himself, as it were, in the immediate presence of his wealth, to know that he might instantly sell or convert his funds, and flee, at a moment's warning, to the extremity of the earth, should any sudden emergency necessitate such a step. triumph of this faucied security, he would congratulate himself that, if his wealth had brought with it anxiety and self-reproach, it at least supplied him with wings which would presently speed him beyond the reach of a pursuer, and ensure him, beneath a foreign sky, a continuance of his present gratifications. Even the chink of the guineas, as his fingers nervously twitched them up and down in his pocket, and the rattling of the large seals appended to his watch-chain, fell gratefully upon his ear, for they wafted to it a golden sound, and he eagerly welcomed the most trifling circumstance that reminded him of his altered fortunes, and gave him an additional assurance of his opulence.

For the same reason, the deferential air of the brokers, with some of whom he had made acquaintance, and who were all eager to court the favour of a large stockholder, filled him with a singular complacency, which was legible in his more composed countenance and gait, until some inexplicable change of mood, prompted by the vagaries of a diseased mind, occasioned him to start from his round, with hurried steps and an evident perturbation of spirit.

As even an unknown individual of singular

appearance, regularly frequenting any peculiar locality in so populous a city as London, soon wears himself a place in the public memory, it is not improbable that many of the citizens now existing may recall the gaunt and slouching figure of Lomax, as he prowled along Bartholomew Lane and Lothbury, chinking the gold in his pocket, and mumbling to himself; the sides of his large looped hat sometimes filled with the pouring rain, while he carried an unfurled umbrella under his arm, and his circumambulations continued with a sort of unconscious doggedness, until some occurrence woke him from his reverie, when he would plunge into the crowd of Cornhill or the Poultry, and disappear.

Time, the great equaliser, which is constantly employed in converting joy into satiety, and sorrow into resignation, is not without its occasional effect in calming the terrors of the guilty, so far as the responsibilities of this world are concerned. Continued impunity na-

turally inspires confidence, and even the timid mind that has long been familiar with danger at last learns to regard it with comparative indifference. Of this Lomax afforded an example, unless when any special alarm by day, or the uncheckable phantasms of sleep, gave new excitement to his fears. Having taken it for granted that Dr. H—— of Bristol would write to Edward Ruddock on the death of Hoffman, he had calculated the time when an answer might be expected from South America, or when the rightful heir might himself arrive to contest the will, and institute proceedings for the recovery of his property, and the punishment of its usurper.

Several months had now elapsed beyond the period of this anticipated contingency; there had been more than sufficient time for a second or a third communication, and yet no challenger appeared, nor was he served with any legal process or notice that intimated an in-

Encouraged by this silence, his hopes gradually predominated over his fears, and periods intervened, during which his mind recovered a portion of its lost serenity. His wife, who gladly remarked the change, sought to confirm it by communicating to him some of her own confidence and fortitude, an object in which she could only partially succeed.

So far, however, was her purpose attained, that, during three or four months, he ceased to worry her either by his unconscious soliloquies, or his pusillanimous reproaches; she forbore, in consequence, to recriminate or upbraid; and both found such an incalculable addition to their comfort from this temporary restraint, that they made a mutual compact for its continuance, flattering themselves that their differences as well as their dangers were over, and that they should thenceforward be enabled to enjoy their good fortune, without any recur-

rence of their recent bickerings and miseries.

Alas! there may be a respite, but, without repentance and atonement, there is no redemption from the consequences of crime: there may be a truce, but there is no permanent cordiality, between its accomplices. An occurrence which could not have been anticipated, and against the effects of which it was impossible to guard, because it suspended over his head an indefinite and invisible danger, restored with tenfold force all the terrors of Lomax, shattered his mind into a pitiable state of agony, revived his bitter reproaches of his wife, irritated her beyond endurance, and converted their temporary reconciliation into an exacerbated hostility.

Some difference of opinion having arisen as to the precise wording of the will, which was still ever uppermost in their thoughts and conversation, it was proposed to refer to it; when it appeared that Lomax, on depositing the original in Doctors' Commons, had omitted to retain a copy. For this oversight his wife gently rebuked him, pointing out the importance of always keeping a duplicate in the house for the sake of reference; and the husband, who was nervously sensitive upon this subject, ordered his carriage to be ready at an early hour of the following morning, that he might repair his error.

Hardly had the clerks taken their respective stations at the Will Office, and commenced the labours of the day by lounging over the newspapers, when the impatient Lomax, who had provided himself with pen and paper for the purpose, proceeded to the proper division, paid the customary fee, and requested permission to see the will of Diedrich Hoffman, mentioning the date of his death.

"Of Diedrich Hoffman?" said the clerk; "why, I took down that will only yesterday for a gentleman who wanted to copy it. I remember it because it was such a queer name he asked for."

"Hey, how, what!" exclaimed Lomax, with breathless agitation. "Yesterday! a gentleman?—copy? What—what—what sort of a person was he? Do you know—know him?"

"Not I; we never ask people's names, but I recollect his figure perfectly: he was a tall thin man, in a low-crowned hat."

"Lord have mercy upon me!" ejaculated Lomax in a hollow voice, as he clung for support to the desk, and then sunk into a chair.

"What is the matter?" demanded the surprised clerk; "are you not well, sir?"

No answer was returned for a minute or two; but the conscience-stricken criminal, aware that his perturbation might excite suspicion, made at length an effort to recover himself, and stammered out:—"I have been a great invalid—the heat over—over—overcame me; I shall be better presently."

"You had better sit quiet for a little while," replied the clerk, "and the cool air of the office will presently revive you. This is the will, sir—Diedrich Hoffman of Bristol—queer name—a foreigner, I suppose."

So saying, he resumed his perusal of the newspaper, and Lomax, left to himself, endeavoured to rally his prostrate faculties.

Vain was the attempt. His senses were bewildered; every thing swam before his dizzy eyes; not a single word of the writing could he decipher; a confusion of hollow sounds rang in his ears, and his agitated hand occasioned such a rustling of the paper, which he almost unconsciously grasped, that it must have excited the attention of the clerk, had not his thoughts been preoccupied by the perusal of the news.

In vain did he argue with himself that there might be no real ground for his apprehensions, and that to betray his alarm might realize the danger which at present was only conjectural. His functions refused their office; and, after several unavailing attempts to peruse the document, he assumed a forced composure, returned it to the clerk, and with tottering knees walked slowly out of the room, stealing terrified glances on either side, in the fear that every individual whom he passed might rush from his seat to seize and detain him.

Feeling, as he crossed the threshold of the door, as if he had escaped from some great and imminent danger, he breathed more freely; the pulsations of his heart were less painfully vehement; the air, which blew freshly, helped to revive him; and he leaped into his carriage with the alacrity of a flying felon who have reached a sanctuary, still, however, hastil drawing up the glasses, and shrinking into corner, in his anxiety to avoid observation.

As the vehicle was driven rapidly away, hiterrors gradually diminished, and he was eve

beginning to reproach himself for his cowardice, when the carriage suddenly stopped, and he heard the voice of his coachman in altercation with strangers in the street.

"I am discovered—I am arrested — God be merciful to me!" again muttered the wretched Lomax, shutting his eyes that he might not see the danger, and snatching up his feet in an agony of terror.

The door, however, was not opened; and, as the voices of the disputants became louder, he was at length enabled to ascertain, with an unspeakable relief of mind, that they were merely quarrelling about a stoppage in the street, a dispute which ended by his coachman turning the carriage round, that he might make his way into Ludgate Hill through Bridge Street.

In the complacency of returning self-possession, the still trembling Lomax, who could not help reproaching himself with the ridiculous alarm which had almost seared his senses, re-

solved that his future cheer of mind should not be disturbed by such ridiculous apprehensions.

Doubtless there was something appalling in the intelligence he had gathered at Doctors' Commons; and he was fully persuaded that the figure he had seen peering through the kitchen-window, when he committed the original will to the flames, was the same mysterious individual who had procured, only on the previous day, a copy of the forged document.

This was a startling conviction. The man, who ever he might be, was living, and in London = he might be walking beside the carriage and that very moment, a fact of which the bare possibility suddenly chasing away his newly born courage, made him huddle himself still more closely in the corner.

But, on the other hand, he reflected that he could only have required a copy of the will for the purpose of instituting legal proceedings,

tedious process, of which the previous notice that must be given would allow him abundant time to sell out his funds, and to embark with his family on board some American or other neutral vessel, for a foreign land, where he should be beyond the reach of danger.

It was possible, moreover, that a copy of the document might have been taken without any hostile intention, or, that if such were even entertained, it might be abandoned from an inability to obtain proof in invalidation of the registered and authenticated deed. Who could challenge it? What eyes but his own and his wife's beheld its forgery? Was it not duly signed in the presence of several living witnesses, whose signatures avouched its genuineness? To these interrogatories his returning confidence gave such satisfactory replies, that he drew himself up with a defying toss of the head, and ejaculated a contemptuous "Ha! ha!" in scorn of his own pusillanimous misgivings.

The carriage, which for some time had been proceeding at a very slow rate, now stopped; and Lomax, whose ear was exceedingly sensitive, caught the buzz and murmur of numerous voices, implying the presence of some unusual crowd. Dastardly as he was, his recent cogitations had invigorated him with so much momentary fortitude, that he raised the blind and lowered the window, in order to ascertain the cause of the stoppage, and of the many tongued sounds that filled the air, when seene was suddenly presented to his eyes of which his bewildered apprehensions could not for a moment determine the precise nature.

Before him extended a street of considerable length and width, entirely filled with a dense and stationary mass of people, while others crowded the windows, balconies, and even some of the house-tops, all gazing intently to wards the further extremity, where, in front of

massive and stern-looking edifice of stone, a igure wearing the semblance of a well-dressed nan, save that a cotton cap enveloped the lead, swung by a rope from a wooden framework.

A moment's recollection convinced him that he was gazing up the Old Bailey upon some ruilty wretch suffering the last sentence of the tw, in front of Newgate. A scene somewhat imilar to that now actually presented to him ad been so often conjured up in his dreams, herein he himself figured as the hangman's ctim, that he had no sooner recognized the sture of the exhibition than his blood ran old, a sickness came over him, and he recoiled orn its contemplation with an involuntary undder, impatiently awaiting the moment then the advance of the carriage should withraw him from a spectacle fraught with such appalling associations.

No progress, however, was made; and at this

juncture two men, standing close by the openwindow of the vehicle, recognized and saluted each other, when one of them inquired:— "What is the offence for which this unhappy man is suffering, that his execution draws together such an unusual assemblage of people?"

"He is, or rather was, a gentleman by birth and station," replied the party thus addressed, "which may in some degree explain the extraordinary interest excited by his fate; and he is hung for forging a will, by which he obtained, and enjoyed for several years, a considerable property."

"Such rascals deserve the gallows," resumed the first speaker, "for they may be said to rob and defraud the dead, as well as the living. I doubt whether you are quite correct, though, in saying that he *enjoyed* his plunder during several years, for there cannot, I suspect, be much enjoyment of any thing when a man

knows that he has always got a halter around his neck."

"Right, right! and a halter, too, which, sooner or later, is sure to throttle him, for this sort of villany seldom escapes ultimate discovery, and it is one that is never pardoned."

Of Lomax's feelings, during this brief but harrowing conversation, language is inadequate to give a description. Afraid to move his arm and draw down the blind or raise the window, lest he should excite observation, he remained nailed to the corner of the carriage, compelled to listen to further comments of the same nature, every word of which pierced his ear like the blade of a sharp knife, and tortured him with the most excruciating mental anguish.

A clamour of voices and a confusion among the mob, arising from the seizure of a pickpocket, occcasioned him once more to look out upon the scene, when his starting eyes encountered an object which made his whole frame thrill with an aggravated horror. Exalted upon the steps of the corner house opposite, and transfixing him with a stern and piercing stare, he beheld a tall thin man in a low-crowned hat—the man—the identical figure, which had disappeared so mysteriously from the kitchen area—the same, doubtless, who had so recently procured a copy of the will, and was now, perchance, marking the victim who might shortly collect another crowd upon the same spot, by dangling from a gibbet like the malefactor upon—whom they were now gazing.

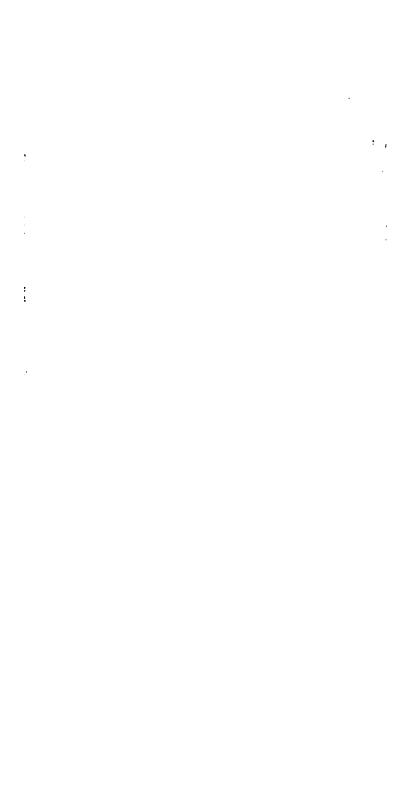
The stranger's terrible eyes seemed to possesses the fabled fascination of the basilisk; for Lomax, withering as he found their glare, was utterly unable to withdraw his own, or even to move a muscle of his body; and thus he remained, for two or three minutes, rigid with horror, until by a convulsive effort, he dashed down the

blind, uttering at the same time a shuddering groan; immediately after which, overcome by contending emotions, he fell backwards in a fit.

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—— "Was't not to make thee great,
That I have run, and still pursue, these ways.
That hale down curses on me?"

Massinger.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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### JANE LOMAX.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Oh, proper stuff!
This is the very coinage of your brain;
This is the air-drawn dagger that you said
Led you to Duncan."

SHARSPEARE.

When the unfortunate Lomax recovered his senses, he found himself lying at the bottom of the carriage, unable, in the bewilderment of the moment, to account for his situation, or for the great exhaustion of his powers. As the occurrences of the morning slowly and sadly vol. II.

returned to his recollection, he raised himsel not without difficulty, upon the seat, and, upon stealing a glance at the houses, ascertaine that he was not far from his own dwelling.

Lassitude having now succeeded to terror, I no longer shook all over, but a cold perspiratic bathed his features; he felt totally unnerved and his efforts to rally his energies, that h might not excite the suspicion of the servant when he alighted at his own door, were onl partially successful, for his disordered dres and his aghast looks, of which he was unconscious, sufficiently revealed to them the something had powerfully disturbed the master.

Upon his entering the parlour, and beholding the partner of his guilt — for he did not so first perceive his children—his assumed come posure suddenly deserted him. Groaning aloud as he sunk into a chair, he murmured, is a hollow voice, "I have seen him!—we as discovered—it is all over—he pursues us—we must fly—we must fly instantly!"

"Mary — Benjamin," said the mother, whose presence of mind never deserted her, "leave us alone for the present — retire from the room; your father is not well—he knows not what he says—this hot weather often overcomes him."

The calm tone in which these words had been pronounced was changed for one of unbeasured and bitter contempt, when, upon their having quitted the apartment, she exclaimed to her husband—"Idiot and dastard! It'e you drunk or mad, that you thus compromise us both with our children? We are discovered—we must fly instantly! Speak for yourself, and sink by yourself, if your own mouth is to be the leak through which your secret is to escape, and the engulphing waters sixto be let in. What fresh hobgoblin have you becountered? What new raw-head-and-bloody-

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house more pron seen, or imagined, that you come nome in this scarecrow plight, and with some many-hog broke?"

The seen him with my live eyes."

"Wiking to askep? is it a nightmare of the light to of the darkness? and who is the numbers being that has thus shattered your minimal body?"

"The terrible one! — the unknown!—the secret witness of our death-involving deed!"

"Ha! ha! I guessed as much—the shadow of an apparition—the likeness of a nonentity. For shame! for shame! how can you suffer yourself to be thus cowed by an illusion?"

"Jane, Jane! this is no dream or vision—no suggestion of my fear or fancy, nor was it ever such. I did see the man peering at us from the area window—it is the same whom I beheld to-day. Oh! how terrible and search—

ing is his eye! If you believe not me, will you doubt the averment of others? Our enemy has commenced operations—we are lost—we must fly!"

Lomax now succinctly related, not without several starts of terror when he heard the least noise, or a ring at the bell, the statement of the clerk at Doctors' Commons, the scene of the execution, and the manner in which he had been transfixed by the appalling stare of the stranger.

"There may be five thousand men in London who answer to this description," said the wife. "In spite of your reiterated asseverations, I persist in affirming that the supposed man in the area was the mere phantom of your fear, and, consequently, that his imaginary apparition at the corner of the Old Bailey was no more formidable, notwithstanding his saucer eyes, than any other individual in the crowd. As to the execution, we know beforehand that

the forgery of a will is a capital offence, which is never pardoned, the ocular demonstration of which fact should only warn you against these wild and haggard looks, and these self-betraying exclamations, lest you yourself should dangle in a cotton cap, like the wretch upon whom you have just been gazing."

"Horrible!" ejaculated the husband, with a shudder; "my flesh creeps at the very thought. How can you allude to such a frightful event with so much apparent levity?"

"Self-possession is not levity, and why should I share your abject trembling? In nothing that has occurred do I perceive the smallest ground for apprehension."

"Amazing! I had almost said incredible! Will you deny that a stranger, answering to the description I have given, has been taking a copy of the will?"

"No; but I care not a rush whether he be tall or short, old or young, in a low or high-

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## JANE LOMAX.

crowned hat. He may have been employed by some of Hoffman's German relations, without any hostile intentions; and, whatever be his object, the law's delay will allow us abundant time to escape, if we are driven to that extenity, which I do not at all anticipate. To confront and defy danger is to conquer it; to fear and to forestall is to invite it; and I see ten times more peril in your terrified visage and tell-tale tongue, than in all the machinations of your tall, thin, hurlothrumbo in the low-

"How true," exclaimed Lomax, with a sigh,

was the observation of the man standing by

the carriage-window, when he said that the

guilty never enjoy their unlawful gains! For

this I can vouch by my own wretched expe
rience. May Heaven falsify his friend's pre
diction that the forgers of wills never escape

discovery and punishment. 'The halter they

constantly wear about their neck seldom fails

to throttle them in the end.' These were his words, and methinks I already feel a strangling sensation in the throat."

"Ay, you will think any thing but sense, and feel every thing but courage. Verily, you are the most chicken-hearted of men, or rather of irrational creatures. A schoolboy would be ashamed of such weakness."

Mrs. Lomax's supreme contempt for her husband, and her auger at his self-accusations and perilous betrayal of alarm before Benjamin and Mary, blinded her to the fact that at the present moment he stood too much in awe of a greater danger to be afraid either of her scorn, her ridicule, or her indignant upbraidings.

His very terrors giving him courage to retaliate her sarcasms, and even to retort her threats, an altercation ensued of a more fierce and menacing character than any by which their passions had been hitherto inflamed. of the man whom he had seen in the kitchen the and convinced of his identity with the individual by whose basilisk eyes he had the morning been transfixed, was eager to the arrangements for the conversion of their property into money, and their instant flight.

At the instigation of the wife, the stock hand been invested in their joint names, so that neither could sell without the acquiescence and signature of the other, and she now positively refused to comply with the wishes of her husband. From a feminine love of domination, or, perhaps, from the natural ascendency which a strong mind feels itself entitled to assume over a weak one, she wished everything to emanate from herself. "Leave all to me," was her reply to his reiterated entreaties that she would not endanger the whole family by a misplaced confidence, which deserved no other name than that of temerity,

if it might not rather be designated a judicial blindness. "When the peril approaches, or is even distinctly visible," she continued, "I will either defeat or escape from it. Danger exalts my courage as much as it depresses your's: I know not how I could place my own bravery in a more conspicuous light. Attempt not to act independently of me; no separate interest must weaken our mutual liability; nothing can divide us; in every thing we must hang together."

- "Hang!" ejaculated Lomax, with a recoiling start.
- "Blockhead and poltroon! I meant not literally; but your convict looks seem to anticipate my averment. Be it so: I repeat to you that we must act together, and live together, or ——die together!"

Lomax, now becoming ten times more wretched than ever, took more frequent refuge from his misery in the temporary oblivion produced by intoxication; and the conjugal truce which had suspended for a while the mutual bickerings of this unhappy pair, now broken, irreparably and for ever, was succeeded by an alienation only the more bitter and absolute because they were compelled to live together beneath the same roof, and to maintain a hollow show correspy towards each other.

Mrs. Lomax had truly declared that her compe invariably rose with the necessity for display; but her fortitude was not proof sinst the incessant gnawings of a guilty concience, nor could she withstand the perpetual car and tear of her husband's indiscretion and imbecility, which suspended the sword of Damocles over her head, and fretted a spirit which carcely any thing could frighten.

In the morning, his obscure and muttering soliloquies assumed a still more perilous character than heretofore; his evening wanderings, not seldom aggravated by intemperance, were

sufficient to excite suspicion, even when they did not threaten some fatal divulgement; and to the hideous phantasms of the night had now been superadded a fearful habit of somnambulency, fraught with all sorts of terrors and dangers.

To nullify, if possible, the effect of these infirmities, Mrs. Lomax did not scruple to inform her friends that her husband's mind, never very strong, had been so much affected by his good fortune as to be liable to occasional aberrations, a result which, as she truly stated, was by no means rare under similar circumstances.

By this fiction, which was soon whispered about in the neighbourhood, suspicion was lulled, and all his oddities were attributed to a partial disorder of his faculties. To some of the inmates of the house, however, who had closer and more frequent opportunities of observation, this pretext did not prove altogether satisfactory. In secret conclave, the servants would hint to

right, and that their master's disquietude might Proceed from a guilty conscience.

Benjamin, who was by nature candid, confiding, and unsuspicious, attributed his father's change of demeanour, and evident perturbation of spirits, to the cause assigned by his mother; under which persuasion he sought to alleviate his calamity by all the good offices which his affectionate and dutiful heart could suggest.

So did Mary, whose superior penetration, however, would not allow her to be so easily hoodwinked. The undefined misgivings with which she was almost afraid to trust her own heart, revealed themselves in the additional dejection of her air, and the unconscious tear that would occasionally steal down her cheek. Her quick-sighted mother, reading her thoughts with the intuitive apprehensiveness of guilt, resented her silent sorrow as an implied reproach, and even became jealous of her atten-

tions to her father. Her darling Benjamin had always engrossed the whole of her parental affections, and, as we are generally averse from those whom we have injured, she sometimes conducted herself towards Mary with a coldness that evinced an almost total indifference, though it had not yet amounted to positive dislike. Under the joint influence, however, of a soured temper and a saddened heart, aggravated by the jealousy to which we have just alluded, she began to treat her now with a harshness which the poor girl was utterly unable to explain, and which she felt the more sensibly, because she knew it to be utterly unmerited.

Mary, whose mind was scarcely less vigorous though much better regulated than that of her mother, was not of a temperament to be permanently depressed by this manifest injustice. If the sense of what was due to her parent would not allow her to resent, or even to com-

Plan of it, the feeling of what was due to be realf prevented her from succumbing beneath it.

Discharging all her duties with the same assiduous punctuality as ever, her heart sought relief from the squabbles of her alienated parents and the splendid misery of Cypress House in the society of such congenial minds as the now extended circle of her acquaintance afforded her. Among these, her affections settled more especially upon Helen Owen and Rose Mayhew, the predilection which she had conceived for the former in their first interview quickly ripening into intimacy and unreserved friendship; while she fully appreciated the talents and the genuis of Rose, though she could not fully sympathize with her romantic turn, and almost morbid sensibility.

If these friends delighted her by their kindred tastes and qualities, others intruded themselves upon her acquaintance who amused her by the total uncongeniality of their character.

Foremost in this list stood Mr. Jasper Pike, a spruce-looking, dapper bachelor, at least forty years of age, the neatness of whose carefully preserved habiliments, in conjunction with a certain briskness of walk and manner, showed that he still considered himself to merit his ci-devant title of a smart young man, although his half-bald head and dried aspect did not fully support his claims. His small grey eyes indicated cunning not unmingled with suspicion. his sharp nose betokened a correspondent keenness, and his thin compressed lips an answerable closeness of disposition; and yet he could not be pronounced ill-looking. An habitual smirk gave animation to his countenance, his teeth were fine, and he wore the look of a man who seemed to be upon friendly terms both with himself and the world. For the latter he had tolerably good reason, as, without the fatigues and anxieties of any regular business, he had contrived to improve an insignificant Patrimony into a comfortable independence by watching the different markets, and speculating in stocks or merchandize, whenever a favourable opportunity occurred. Compared with his narrow inexpensive mode of living, he might be pronounced rich; judged by his penurious habits, and close calculation in the minutest trifles, he would be deemed a pauper; though, in the midst of all this uneasy parsimony, he failed not, at times, to make a boast of his easy circumstances.

"As I have been the means of introducing you to the acquaintance of Mr. Jasper Pike," said Helen Owen, one morning to her new friend, "and as I have gained some insight into his character, both from personal observation, and the hints of my uncle Bryant, who has known him for many years, I think it right for your good guidance, seeing that the crea-

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ture is a bachelor, apparently looking out for a moneyed wife, to give you the result of my experience. But, before I do so, tell me with your usual frankness what is your own impression of him?"

"That is rather a delicate question," said Mary, hesitatingly; "the gentleman is a friend—nay, I have been told an admirer—of your's."

"An admirer of my purse he may be, but, as to my person. I believe that he views it, as he does our whole sex, with supreme indifference. Dr. Johnson has flippantly and falsely asserted that any woman would marry Jonathan Wild rather than Saint Austin, if he had three pence more. Now, in this respect, Mr. Pike resembles the doctor's fabled female. If he believes that you have a hundred pounds more than I have, I shall be instantly eclipsed, and you will become the goddess of his idolatry, until he can find a richer divinity to whom he may offer his venal homage. Mr. Jasper Pike,

short, is one of a class solely to be found in the province covered with houses which we deminate London, in the midst of whose dense almost countless population a man may live in so perfect a solitude, so totally free from observation, even of his nearest neighbours, completely independent of the influences and ponsibilities of public or private opinion, at, the social and moral qualities never being lied upon to develop themselves, die away, and the innate selfishness of his heart may be stered with full impunity, safe from all remarks or detection."

"Unless he should be exposed to the

"Ay, ay, you and I are exceptions to the deall crowd, who, like owls, are purblind in the light. In the country, a man cannot, as in London, hide himself among a million and a half of his fellow-creatures, and become a deserter from the performance of his duties.

The eyes of his neighbours are upon him; he is amenable to public opinion; he is, moreover, registered and enrolled in the parish books; he must share all the liabilities of his station and his fortune; he must discharge his obligations, whether public or domestic, whether municipal, parochial, or social. the metropolis, almost every thing of this sort may be evaded, if a man be mean and sordid enough to make the attempt. A guinea subscription to a district or a mendicity society acquits the London selfist of all claims on the score of charity; and, as to any other demands, upon his time, his purse, or his talents. he carefully withdraws from them, not scrupling to employ the most paltry shifts and subterfuges for the accomplishment of his object."

"Your description of this class does not give me a very elevated opinion of Mr. Pike."

"It will not be raised when I add that he

belongs to a subdivison still less amiable in its characters. Many of the selfish beings I have portraying 'assume a virtue if they have it not,' and are so far ashamed of this egotism to conceal it. But Mr. Pike boasts of his to calindifference to all interests but his own; he would take every advantage of the world, and would take every advantage of the world, and siprocate none; he would grasp all he can be the distorbed by an irrefragable proof of superior brewdness and sagacity."

"Meaning craft and dishonesty," said Mary,
for I deem such utter selfishness little better
than negative swindling."

"True, but it is legal, and this is his defence. 'I offend no law,' he exclaims; 'nay, I act in conformity to the great primary rule that self-preservation is the first law of nature, for I do but practice my finesses against those who are seeking to take advantage of me in way or other. It is a man's paramount

duty to preserve his property, his time, and his occupations, for his own comfort and advantage.' Mr. Pike is bold, in short, in avowing his total want of all social principle, while in every thing else his cowering selfishness and his fear of incurring any sort of responsibility or personal danger render him as timid as a hare."

"But what says he to the obligations imposed upon us by the moral law? What says he to the injunctions of religion that we should love our neighbour as ourselves?"

"Why, he confines it to spinsters who have property of their own. He affects to love me for instance, and he will love you still more tenderly when he has ascertained that you are richer. He measures every thing by —"

The conclusion of her speech was prevented by the entrance of the servant to announce Mr. Pike.

"What is said of Old Nick," whispered

## CHAPTER II.

" And he is oft the wisest man,
Who is not wise at all."
WORDSWORTH.

"AHA, ladies!" exclaimed the visiter, as he jerked into the room, springing upon his toes, and affecting a youthful jauntiness; "do I find you together? this is, indeed, lucky; it is killing two birds with one stone, for I intended to have done myself the pleasure of calling at Cypress House, and shall be happy to beau Miss Lomax, if she is wending homeward. You see, young ladies, I am not struck silent, like Captain Macheath, when he encountered two beauties at once:

'How happy could I be with either,
Were t'other dear charmer away,
But, while you thus plague me together,
To neither a word will I say—
But Tol-de-rol—lol-de-rol-lol.'"

Mr. Pike sang this verse with an affected \*\*onchalance\*, though in reality he exerted the best powers of a voice which had never been 800d, and had now become as thin and dry as himself.

"We feel infinitely flattered," said Mary, by your informing us that we plague you, as well as by your comparing us to the damsels in the Beggars' Opera, both of whom, if I mistake not, were admirers of the gallant captain."

"Nay, now, this is unkind, Miss Lomax; this is wounding me in the tenderest point, for, if there is any thing upon which I pique myself, it is upon my profound respect for the fair sex."

"I think we must forgive him," cried Helen;
it is quite natural that he should mistake
himself for Captain Macheath, and the rest is,
therefore, excusable."

"So far, indeed, I may be said to resemble VOL. II. C

him, that I have always been a man for the

"How, then, are we to account for you still being a bachelor, unless we are to presurthat you have never been a lady's man asked Helen.

"Really, now, you are more severe that your friend. It becomes me not to boast, but a person like me, well known to be in independent circumstances, need not long wear the willow, unless by his own choice. I am not advocate for very early marriages; perhaps, too, I am difficult to please; but, when I find a suitable partner in every respect, and one, moreover, who unites beauty with virtue, I should desire nothing better than to strike on bachelor flag, and surrender at discretion."

At the conclusion of this speech, he fix his eyes upon Mary. with a significant smirl "Ah!" thought Helen, as she smiled at b friend, "my chance is lost; he has weight

us both in his money scales, and I am found wanting in the balance."

This lucky guess was a literal truth, for he had ascertained, through the means of a clerk in the Bank, the exact amount of stock standing in the name of Joel Lomax and his wife, the result of which knowledge was a determination to cultivate their acquaintance, with an ultimate view to the chances of becoming their son-in-law; and to renounce the hopes behad secretly formed of securing Helen Owen and her fortune, through his intimacy with her nucle.

"It is some distance to Cypress House," maid Mary; "and, as I presume, from Mr. Pike having brought his umbrella, that he anticipates rain, I must not delay my return."

"I can assure you, Miss," smirked the bachelor, "that there is no present appearance of rain; but, as I never trust the weather out of my sight, I always carry an umbrella,

and invariably bring it up stairs with me, for lost an old one some years ago, by leaving it is a gentleman's hall. In trifles of this sort, peop are so selfish, I might say so dishonest! A umbrella is a wonderful preserver of clothed Mine, you will observe, has a cane-stick it; I am amazed how you ladies can car parasols with metal rods, which must be exceedingly dangerous in a thunder-storm, and I am sure, to judge by the present company that you do not require any additional attration to draw the sparks about you. He! he he!"

He again smirked at Mary, as if to intimathat, although his compliment included bot it was only meant for one.

"An umbrella," continued the calculation Pike, "soon saves its cost in saving coachire. I scarcely ever get into a hackney-coact for my chambers are in a central situation, and I am a famous walker."

"I cannot help fancying that a residence in chambers must be very lonesome and dull," observed Mary.

"True, Miss Lomax, very true, but look at the cheapness and the other advantages. I reside, for instance, in one of the inns of court, which is extra-parochial, so that I have no parish taxes to pay or duties to perform. Then, I am not a housekeeper, so that I may dine out all the year round, and cannot be called upon to give a single dinner in return. Besides, I am thus happily incapacitated for a thousand troublesome offices, which I might be called upon to perform, either for the public, or for my friends. I can neither be bail, nor Juyman, nor drawn for the militia. I have always made it a rule to decline being trustee, or executor, or witness of any kind, scrupulously avoiding all liabilities or responsibilities, that might involve me in the smallest trouble; a line of conduct which has not only kept me out of hot water, but has made me independena of the whole world."

"But, still, there are certain taxes whic you cannot avoid."

"Not many, not many," cried Pike, with knowing nod and a wink of his eye. "Mucmay be done by a little management. It shappens that as the collector always leaves had notices for the income-tax at the same time the year, he invariably finds my chambers shoup, the letter-box closed, and a little papestuck over it, with the words, 'Gone away. When the rogue has completed his rounds I return to my rooms, and am ready to giv him the slip next year in the same way. Leg bail, you see, Miss Lomax, is the only bail am competent to give, not being a house-holder. He! he!"

"But, is this honest?" inquired Mary, with a look expressive of contempt.

"Honest! to be sure it is, and lawful, too

surely, I may go out of town what time I please, and return when I please. I tell no untruth. I am gone away for the time. It is not my business to be running after tax-gatherers. Every man for himself, and God for us all; that's my motto. You see, we single fellows lead a merry life: I owe no man a shilling, and am well tiled in, as the phrase goes; and yet, as I before said, I am, and always have been, devoted to the fair sex, and can have no earthly objection to settle down as a married man, when I meet with such a partner as I have a right to expect, and one whose fortune is equal to my own."

Here he ogled Mary in a manner that was meant to be tender, though it was merely vulgar and impertinent, for the bachelor could not get rid of an unfortunate self-sufficiency of manner, that rendered him often most offensive when he meant to be most ingratiating. "Out of the question of marriage," he continued,

turning to Helen, "I make no distinctions and am proud to call myself the most devote-humble servant of the ladies in general."

"On the part of whom," said Helen, placin her hands before her, and making him a burlesque curtsey,—"I beg to inform you that appreciate your homage as it deserves."

Mary now rose to take her departure, accompanied by Helen, who had agreed to spend the afternoon at Cypress House; and, as Mr. Pike offered his services to beau them, (such was his usual phrase) they accepted his escort though his officious politeness, or rather his selfish timidity and over-carefulness, rendered him a troublesome companion.

"Cross the street, ladies, if you please: quick, quick!" was one of his first exclamations; "do you not observe that the old house on this side are badly roofed? the wind is blowing strong, and it would not be so pleasan to have a tile upon one's head. It is astonishing

by anxiety to avoid it! Once, just as I had adopted the precaution we have now been using, a tile which, if I had remained where I was, would have passed me without injury, was blown quite across the street, and wounded me so severely in the leg, that I was laid up for a month. On another occasion, in my huny to avoid the splashing of a hackney—oach—those drivers never think of one's clothes—I fell down an area, bruised myself severely, upset a bucket of hog-wash, and completely spoilt a new pair of pantaloons."

At this catalogue of calamities, the last of hich was uttered with a most feeling emphasis, Helen laughed outright, asking her companion whether it might not be sometimes better for Mr. Pike to trust to fate and chance, than to depend upon his own clever management, which, like a will-o'-the-wisp, seemed to be always leading him into scrapes and quagmires.

" No," was the reply; "since I do every thing by calculation, I have, at all events, the satisfaction of knowing that I act upon a right system."

"That may be questioned when the intended self-preservation so often turns out to be self-injury. Long-sighted people, who are perpetually peering out for distant dangers, are very apt to overlook those that are immediately beneath their nose, like the old philosophem who fell into a pond while he was gazing at the moon, and might have seen the moon in the pond if he would only have looked straight before him."

To this observation Pike made no reply—
for, having perceived that the dust was blow—
ing rather detrimentally upon his coat, he
quitted his outside position, and placed himself
between his companions, declaring that he
never felt himself so proud as when he had
a lady upon each arm. Scarcely had

achieved this polite and gallant act, when he trod upon a loose stone, which, liberally besprinkling him with dirty water, drew from him the remark that he certainly was the most unfortunate person in the world, since the more he attempted to avoid accidents and ananoyances, the more sure he was to encounter others of a worse description.

"May we not then reasonably conclude,"

\*\*Sked Helen, with a smile, "that the ill-fated
fish which jumped out of the frying-pan into
the fire was a Pike?"

"There can be no doubt he was one of my an cestors, whose propensity I have inherited," replied the bachelor, stopping the progress of the party while he carefully rubbed off each individual splash with his pocket-handkerchief.

"I am afraid we must now wish you good coming," said Mary, on their reaching the corner of the next street, "for we intend calling on Mrs. Skinner in our way home."

"I shall be happy to accompany you," was the bachelor's reply; "for, though I am not particularly fond of over-strict people and saints, Skinner is a rich man, gives excellent dinners, and I shall be glad to pay him a visit, now that I am in this part of the world. It will save me coach or boat hire, on another day."

Mrs. Skinner was a sour and sanctimonious gossip, whose original propensity to backbiting and slander was not only aggravated by ill-health and ill-temper, but by the discovery that her unregenerate neighbours, though not a tenth part so good and pious as herself, seemed to be ten times happier. To avoid, however, the imputation of being a scandal-monger, she had recourse to a disingenuous, though by no means uncommon, finesse, always pretending that the tales which had originated with herself had been communicated to her by others, whom she sharply rebuked for their

censorious tongues. By this artifice, she indulged her own love of calumny, while she obtained a reputation with many simple-witted People for superior candour and liberality.

"What a capital dining-room we passed!"

"Claimed Pike, as they entered the house:

"The table was set out for twelve, and I never so one more handsomely appointed, with ice
Palls, and all. I wonder whether Mr. Skinner is at home, perhaps he might ask me. I throught I smelt real turtle, and I know he metimes gives it."

"I beg your pardon for keeping you waiting," cried Mrs. Skinner, as she hastened into the room, panting for breath and red with anger; "but those good-for-nothing children are the plague of my life. They are afforded every opportunity in the world of becoming pious, orderly, and obedient, and yet, the more pains I take, the worse they seem to be. I have a godly governess, an excellent young woman,

who is very strict, who is authorized to correct them as she thinks fit, and upon whom I am perpetually inculcating that, as they are born in sin and the children of wrath, she must break their spirits, and whip the devil out of them while they are young. I am sure I do not spoil them myself by sparing the rod.—

Then they have such religious advantages: and pet little William flew at me and bit me just now, like a tiger-cat, merely because I was whipping him. I'll teach him to be passionate, a young tyrant!"

"I have no doubt you will!" thought Helen, who was so fond of children, and so perfectly convinced that they might be still more effectually spoilt by over-severity than by over-indulgence, that she dared not trust herself with any reply to this unmaternal diatribe. Mary, who found the topic equally unpleasant, endeavoured to start some new one; but the conversational powers of Mrs. Skinner were

wherever a subject might begin, it was sure to be presently twisted into the views, interests, and proceedings, of the little religious coterie to which she belonged.

As her auditors seemed to be but little conversant with some of these subjects, she contemplated them with that expression of demure and sour disdain which is almost peculiar to her class, until the name of Mrs. Hunter happened to be accidentally mentioned, when she gave a deep sigh, and exclaimed, with a look of commiseration:—"Poor woman! I fear she has worse troubles to encounter than any she has yet experienced. That profligate, abandoned son of her's!"

"I did not know that she had more than one," exclaimed Helen. "You cannot, surely, be speaking of Mr. Alfred Hunter?"

be said to be living under the same roof, you

ought to know what the world says of him. am only amazed that Mr. Bryant, who is a sensible person, and a man of the world, should retain him in his employment, especially when he has two young ladies, and one of them a reputed heiress, inmates in his house. You were aware, of course, that Mr. Hunter has been a notorious gambler, that he has ruined his mother, and even purloined his sister's portion, which has been the occasion, poor thing! of breaking off her marriage, and destroying her happiness for ever. That, I fear, there is no denying. I have been told, by those who ought to know, that he drinks and mingles with profligate society; for this charge, however, I trust there is no foundation; I am the last person to say any thing unhandsome; but I have been most confidently assured that he is a professed infidel, and never goes to any place of public worship, which is an offence that never can be forgiven either in this world or in the next. Now, if these things are not true, it. is really quite monstrous that people should invent such wicked and abominable accusations."

During the latter part of this speech, Helen's bosom had been heaving with indignation, and her eyes sparkled as she prepared to vindicate the party thus deeply accused. Her purpose was prevented by the return of Mr. Pike, who had quitted the room some time before to seek for Mr. Skinner, in the hope of obtaining an invitation to partake of the turtle, and who now re-appeared, declaring, with a disappointed look, that his search had been Deeming it possible, however, that he might accomplish his object with the lady, he drew out his watch, and exclaimed, with a well-acted surprise, "Heavens! I had no idea it was so late! I shall lose my dinner! I had engaged to meet two or three friends at the Mitre. How very unlucky! and

i me tut i ne v ma l'un sum a strange une cuttur anev vinner to betake m

From a was no non-time not forth a serior from the non-time lidy of the house to be serious small when he continued will be with a marriadous substaction, who may write the handres in which the major when we handres in participation of the major with the major to the productions are well able after a term give in entertainment of the will be seen a non-times specific and small seen a major specific a dinner.

Four and Many new rose to take their deporter, when Mrs. Skinner said she would according them to Cypress House, as she had lowished to have a little conversation with M. Lomax. Whatever may be their motives, as we are far from denying that these may

Well meant even when most mistaken, the overgood folks of this class are generally distinguished by an insatiable mania for making converts, evincing considerable tact in selecting those junctures when their victims may be assailed with the greatest probability of success.

Not with a more unerring instinct does the vulture hie from afar towards his prostrate and defenceless prey — not with a more remorseless pertinacity does the gad-fly fix upon the sores and galled places of the animal he worries, than do these missionaries of misery swoop upon their intended proselytes, when their bodily strength is bowed down by sickness, or they are wounded in heart by sorrow and anxiety. Well do most of them know by their own experience that a wretched mind is the fittest recipient for a wretched bigotry, a morbid spirit the most likely to be infected with a diseased religion.

Mrs. Skinner had noticed for some time

post the secret disquietarie and falling health of Mrs. Lumax, whom she had accordingly marked down as a hit subject for her spirituations.

When the party was again en route for Cypress House, the bachelor, who was verpointed and officious in his attentions to Mary would have possessed himself of her arm, but she evaded his purpose, attached herself thelen, and left him to escort Mrs. Skinner, arrangement by which he was by no mean well pleased, having conceived an additional dislike for his companion since she had declined taking his hints about the dinner.

A few minutes after they had started, they were arrested by a sudden exclamation of "Stop! stop!" from Pike; when several people rushed hastily past them, and they perceived, at the other extremity of the street into which they had turned, a knot of men in blue jackets, vociferating angrily, and flourishing:

bludgeons in the air, as if engaged in a

"It seems to be a party of drunken sailors fighting together," said Pike, as he ran into a little shop, and held the door in his hand, ready to close it. "You had better follow me, and take refuge here till the row is over."

"There is hardly room for us all," observed Helen.

"Hardly, indeed," replied Pike, without offering to quit the situation he had secured; "but there is another shop over the way, and I am sure nobody would be so ungallant as to refuse a place to the ladies."

"You had better not huddle so close to the wall, sir," said the shopwoman to Pike, "for we have just had it painted."

"Well, I thought I smelt paint," exclaimed the bachelor; and, turning partially round, he beheld, with a horror which was instantly and rividly depicted on his countenance, that the

some a min saint of his new blue coat we seemed with white. For the moment, to ment appearable actually deprived him of members or permaps he was disconcerted by the magnetic rich as young and fair companion we have Sainter actor laughed) found it imposs to the suppress.

signed the suffers withat, whenever I exercisely include principles or forethought, I as sure to meet with some special misfortune."

"As you have succeeded in keeping yor sain in a whole jacket." smiled Helen, "yo may well submit to its being a painted one-

"Why, I must comess that I have a pasticular horror of a drunken sailor, for, is running away from an approaching party of them. I once fell over a dog and got sadd bitten in the leg, an accident which I should have avoided had I stood my ground, for the fellows turned down another street. I hop

the rogues whom we just saw scuffling together have done the same; I hear no noise—all seems Ouce more quiet."

Lauk, sir, these were a pressgang," cried the shopwoman; "and I fear, by their coming blows, that some poor creature has been desperate enough to resist them."

"A pressgang!" ejaculated Pike; "Lord deliver us! what a dangerous neighbourhood!

I trust the wretches have taken themselves
Off."

"Yes, sir, they have all disappeared, and I suppose have carried off their prize with them."

\*\* Are you positive?" demanded the bachelor.

Street, for, as they are mostly seafaring people in this quarter, they soon get out of the way when a pressgang is known to be abroad."

"Then we had better be jogging," said Pike,

resume his usual brisk manner; "I hope none of the ladies were frightened."

"Oh, no! the alarm was not on our side, said Helen smiling.

"There was not the smallest ground far alarm on any side. None in the world," resumed Pike. "My unlucky coat seems to be the only sufferer. Allons! march."

The party advanced accordingly, until the reached the scene of the tumult they had wit nessed; when Helen and Mary, who were is front, uttered a simultaneous cry of surprise on their discovering a figure lying prostrate and apparently insensible, close to the wall of a house.

"Some low, drunken fellow!" cried their companion; "you had better hurry on."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Helen; "by him dress and appearance, he is evidently not of the common class. Good Heavens! what shall we do to assist him?"

erhaps he has fallen down in a fit," added Marv. With these words she ran up, for Helen seemed to be hesitating how to act, and turned the face of the stranger round towards the air, when they perceived that he eridently a gentleman, and fresh excla:nations of compassion and surprise burst from their lips, on their noticing his ghastly countenance and the death-like insensibility into which he had sunk. "He breathes, although his eyes are closed," cried Mary. "It may be an attack of apoplexy — and yet he is quite Young. He must have instant succour, or we know not what may happen. Dear Mrs. Skinner! your house is close at hand; will You allow me to summon some of the neighbours, that they may convey him thither?"

"Quite impossible, Miss Lomax; and I wonder you should venture to make so very strange and indelicate a proposition. I know nothing of the party; he may be an impostor VOL. II.

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or a thief, for dress and appearance pr-c nothing now-a-days. If I had ever seen hi at Salem or Bethesda chapels, so as to be assured of his religious principles, it would be a different matter."

"Let him then be carried to my uncle's, at the Wharf, and I will be responsible for all the consequences," cried Helen.

"Nay," resumed Mary, "Cypress House's much nearer than Eagle Wharf, and we will have him immediately taken thither, since Mr. Skinner objects to receive him."

"In that case," said the latter lady, "I shall defer my visit for the present; and indeed I now recollect there is a Tract Society meeting to-day, which I had promised to attend; so I must be under the necessity of wishing you good morning." With these word she coldly inclined her head, and hastily walks away down the next street.

"If you will have the goodness, Mr. Pil-

to run for a surgeon, I will collect a few of the stighbours, to carry this unfortunate gentleman to my father's," said Mary.

"It is painful to me to refuse any thing to the ladies, but in this instance you must really excuse me. I make it a rule never to interfere in affairs of this sort. Death may ensue; then there will be a coroner's inquest, perhaps a public trial. I may be subposenaed as a witness, and exposed to all sorts of annoyances and expenses, without getting a shilling for my time and trouble. Take my advice—have nothing to do with the business—it is no concern of your's. Send for a constable, and let the creature be carried to a chemist's or the Poorhouse."

"Both of these are distant. If we leave him, be may be robbed, or further maltreated; perhaps he may perish. I am determined not to quit him till I see him deposited at Cypress House."

"There is poor Mrs. Skinner walking back

all alone," cried Pike; "that must not be. It liteness to the ladies is every thing. I we run after her, and accompany her home. Pahaps she may give me some spirits of turpen tine to take the paint out of my coat." So saying, he ran hastily away, adding in a lower tone, "Or perhaps she may ask me to dinner after all; who knows?"

Alone and unprotected, in a neighbourhood which had just been disturbed by violence both Helen and Mary might have felt the awkwardness of their situation, had not their thoughts been engrossed by anxiety to relieve the stranger as quickly as possible.

Helen's solicitude upon this subject almodefeated its object by the agitation into which it threw her; but her friend's collectednes and presence of mind did not for a momen desert her. Writing down the address of the nearest surgeon, she despatched a messeng to request his instant attendance, and the

hurrying to a house, from the window of which some men were gazing unconcernedly on the scene, she prevailed on them, by the promise of a reward, to take a door from its hinges, on which they placed the sufferer, and, raising him on their shoulders, proceeded at a quick walk towards Cypress House.

Mary followed as fast as she was able, but she was obliged to support her friend, whose energies seemed to fail her, now that the immediate necessity for their exertion had ceased, and who complained of a faintness which, for the moment, threatened to overcome her. A glass of water, however, helped to restore her powers; and, by leaning upon the arm of her companion, they were both enabled to reach Cypress House a few minutes after the arrival of the fainting stranger.

## CHAPTER III.

" Much she laboured to conceal That gentlest passion of the breast, Which all can feign, but few can feel: Ingenuous fears the flame suppressed, Yet still she owned its hidden power." CARTWRIGHT-

LOMAX, who lived in perpetual apprehensios of an arrest by the officers of justice, no some saw a posse of strangers approaching, than h hurried to the door in the garden wall, intend ing to make his own escape by the river ? should his fears be realised, and caring little or nothing for the fate of his wife.

A more accurate inspection of the party? as they crossed the court-yard, having satisfied him that his forebodings were groundless, and that some accident had happened, he stole back to the house, and, on learning the nature of the occurrence, directed every assistance to be afforded. Little aid seemed to be required, for the patient's senses being presently restored, he opened his eyes, sate up on the sofa, and, having swallowed a cordial administered to him by the fair hand of Mary, was soon enabled to answer interrogatories without any apparent inconvenience.

He stated himself to be Evelyn Barlow, the son of a shipbuilder, at Deptford, adding that when he met the pressgang they were just placing handcuffs on one of his father's workmen, who, though he had formerly been a sailor, was no longer subject to impressment, being now beyond the limited age, and having, moreover, a protection.

"These facts I offered to substantiate," continued the narrator, "and gave my card to the leader of the party, but I was rudely thrust—aside, and insulted with such gross abuse, that,—in the irritation of the moment, I seized and struck the fellow who was dragging off his prisoner. One of his comrades instantly trip—ped up my heels, and I must have fallen with—such violence against the wall of the house as the have stunned myself, for I have no recollection—of what subsequently occurred. I have been an invalid lately, and I may perhaps have fainted away, but at all events I feel no othems immediate inconvenience than a somewhant painful contusion at the back of my head, which is but a small punishment for so great an according to folly."

"I am surprised, indeed," said Mary, "thabeing single-handed, and an invalid, you should have ventured to attack such a crew of ruffians."

"I have always considered impressment an outrage the more cruel and unwarrantable al

the friendless; and I could not command myself when I saw them dragging away old Edwards, an honest man, and the father of a family, (whom, even by their own lawless law, they had no right to touch) as if he had been the basest criminal. However, I was doubly wrong. I should not have put myself into a Passion, and still less should I have used violence. By an application in the proper Truster, I have no doubt I shall get him released, and methinks I have already strength to set about it. Not a moment shall be lost."

So saying, he made an effort to rise, but it Proved too much for his strength, and he sain sunk back upon the sofa.

"Let me entreat you, sir," said Mary, with an impressive earnestness, "not to attempt to move, in your present precarious state. Until the arrival of the surgeon, for whom I sent

some time ago, you must really allow consider you our prisoner."

"A thousand thanks for your kindnes forethought," said the patient, smiling; as to the captivity with which you menac I should not quickly wish to terminate it, I not most anxious to procure the enlarge of Edwards, as well as apprehensive the presence here may prove inconvenient."

Mary had just requested him to dismifears upon the latter account, when the su was announced, and she rejoined Helen usually sedate mood being exchanged for of the liveliest animation, as she same praises of their temporary inmate. "benevolence! what heroism!" she excla "to attack a whole pressgang in ord liberate a poor artisan, whom they were justly tearing away from his family!"

"Fool-hardiness might be a more approperm," observed Helen.

Perhaps so, but I admire it nevertheless.

When I consider his generous motive, I must applaud his temerity, reckless and uncontrollable as it was. I like the man who cannot witness an oppressive and illegal act without a burst of indignation, even though it may have burst of prudence."

"I can easily fancy that you like the man,"

The description of the series of the seri

"At all events," replied Mary, blushing,

"the candour with which he avows his fault

should atone for it; and one may easily for
give a man for being a little too brave in a good

Cause."

Oh! I admit Mr. Barlow's intrepidity, and regret that it should be so badly seconded by his personal powers, and that he does not

possess the good looks as well as the valour of a hero of romance."

"He told us that he had been an invalid, which, in conjunction with his recent accident, might well account for his paleness. But his countenance expresses intelligence and amiability. What more would you require?"

"Nay, I require nothing; but he seems to combine all the good qualities that you desiderate, since you are equally pleased with his lack of colour and his superfluity of rashness."

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Mary, who recurred in thought to the marked partiality of her friend, when Alfred Hunter had been vilipended, might easily have retaliated this raillery; but she never imitated the playful sallies of Helen, never indulged in a malicious pleasantry, never trifled with the feelings of others, even in joke, laying it down as a maxim that to give pain of any sort, and especially to one's friends, is equally independent.

fensible, whether it be done in sport or in

She made no reply, therefore, to Helen's badinage, except by her blushes, and was by no means sorry when their conversation was interrupted by the appearance of her father, especially as he came to announce the opinion of the surgeon that Mr. Barlow had received no serious injury, although the delicate state of his health required precautions with which a more robust subject might have dispensed.

"He has been bled," continued Lomax, "and as he seems much more anxious about the impressed man than himself, and insists on taking legal steps for reclaiming him, before he is sent on board the tender, I have promised that our carriage shall convey him to Deptford, where his attorney resides, if he will only keep himself perfectly quiet for another half hour. He will afterwards proceed immediately to his father's, where he will of course receive

every attention, for, if I mistake not, he is an only son. I have often heard our neightiours speak of Mr. Barlow, the shipbuilder, as a very wealthy as well as worthy man."

"I hope the love at first sight will prove reciprocal," whispered Helen to her friend, "for the only son of a worthy and wealthy shipbuilder is a conquest not to be despised in these lover-less times. You will now have a choice of admirers—one who attacks pressgangs like a Don Quixote, and another who runs away from them like a Sancho Panza—while I, happy I, shall now stand a chance of getting the latter—alias, Mr. Jasper Pike—back again!"

Helen returned to Eagle Wharf, eager to relate to Rose Mayhew all that she had heard, seen, and encountered, during her absence, a recital which, with her habitual propensity to the ridiculous, she occasionally broadened into burlesque and caricature, though there was

always a basis of truth in her ludicrous perversions. In recounting Mrs. Skinner's im-Putations upon Alfred Hunter, Rose, who was evidently interested in the subject, insisted upon the cruelty of crediting insinuations totally unsupported by proof; and opposed with such success the affectionate praises of his mother and sister, the most competent judges of his character and conduct, to the malignant inuendoes of his calumniator, who personally unacquainted with him, that Helen, driven in succession from all her assumed positions, and baffled in all her sham charges, gave up the contest, and retreated to her own room, feeling a pique against Rose which she could not subdue, although she acknowledged its injustice. No wonder that she was unable to explain her sensations, for it was the first time that her bosom had been disturbed by the pangs of jealousy.

The novelty and the painfulness of her sen-

sations—for she could not bear to harbour one unkindly feeling towards her gentle and amiable friend - induced her, in the solitude of her own chamber, to analyse the cause of her "How comes it," she demanded emotions. of herself, "that, believing Hunter to be innocent, or at least only responsible for a few venial indiscretions, I pretended to think him guilty of every thing laid to his charge, unless it were to hoodwink Rose, and to conceal my real predilection in his favour? Why was I angry with her for the generous ardour with which she undertook his defence, except from an unworthy jealousy, of which, momentary as it was, I had hoped myself to be incapable? And why, after all, am I secretly pleased at the success of her exculpation? Alas! I fear there is but one answer to these questions-because I have a secret regard for her client. Well! I plead guilty-I confess the fact-and what then? By a combination of circumstances.

that give interest to his character, and by the display of endowments and accomplishments, little in accordance with his humble situation, Mr. Hunter has surprised my feelings into a compassion for his fate — into a pity on account of his family. And is not this sym-Pathy with the unfortunate not only natural but laudable? His appearance is certainly exceedingly striking, and some of his good qualities may have excited my admiration; but I am not conscious of any leaning towards him beyond this excusable partiality; I am not aware of any regard that I cannot control and Stabdue just as I may think fit. As to my falling love, and throwing myself away upon a arf-clerk, the idea is too ridiculous. I am not likely, mad-cap as they used to call me, to commit any such gross impropriety, especially as I myself do not seem to have made the least impression upon the insensible cature, a fact which materially lowers my estimate of him as to taste and disc ment!"

In this half serious, half bantering strain reasoned with herself for some time, deci at length that, as the novelty of finding so r unexpected recommendations in a clerk been the principal cause of the predilection which her feelings had been surprised most likely method of checking it was to every opportunity of throwing herself intersociety, until she could meet him with perindifference.

"Familiarity," thought Helen, "breeds tempt; and in a few weeks I have no doubt I shall look upon Mr. Hunter—not with disc for he must always merit my respect on acc of his misfortunes, but with scarcely more possession than I entertain for Mr. Jasper I who, as an epitome of the take-care-of-num one sort of people, may be considered favourite aversion, my pet horror."

Poor Helen's expedient for conquering her incipient regard by familiarizing herself with its object was a device that will never succeed, until steel can deprive the magnet of its attraction by frequency of collision. Circumstances were as favourable as she could wish for the full trial of the experiment.

Mrs. Bryant, anxious to make her stay at the Wharf as agreeable as possible, and never tertaining a moment's thought that her heiress rece could dream of attaching herself to "a poor creature who was completely down in the orld, and had not one guinea to rub against other," frequently invited Hunter to spend the caing up stairs, a courtesy which he always early accepted and gratefully acknowledged.

Helen and Rose were both equally anxious to draw forth the accomplishments of which they had received the first knowledge from his mother and sister; and, as their visitant was not less desirous to ingratiate himself with

his fair companions, and more especially with Rose, by whom he had been smitten at first sight, and who daily gained a stronger hold of his heart and his imagination, he readily lent himself to their views. His portfolio, which contained drawings still more beautiful than any they had yet seen, was submitted to their inspection; and, while Helen played the piano, he frequently sang duets with her friend.

Rose Mayhew, a creature of the most susceptible temperament, who was all sensibility and enthusiasm, and who had already felt the profoundest commiseration for Hunter, on account of the humble state to which his reverses had doomed him, was not proof against the touching tenderness that glistened in his eyes and trembled in his voice, whenever he sang the sufferings of a hopeless and yet ineradicable passion. By that mysterious intuition, which enables lovers to develop each other's secret, while it is yet folded in the bud, and no breath

improvident, speculative, charges so ofterbrought against him both by Mr. and Mrs 
Bryant, and so feebly rebutted, that she could
scarcely doubt their truth. By marrying him
under such circumstances, she should only
aggravate the distress with which he was already contending, while she might not improbably occasion him to forfeit the favour of
Mr. Bryant.

For a misplaced affection there is perhaps no effectual cure but absence, a remedy which poor Rose was so far from being enabled to apply, that she was brought, by a combination of untoward circumstances, into almost daily communication with the party whom she would most willingly have avoided.

Of the perpetual contest thus engendered with her feelings the effect soon became visible, for she was too delicate in her comformation, both mental and corporeal, to be able to sustain it with impunity. Her spirits and her health

sank beneath the effect. A wan hue succeeded to her clear olive-coloured complexion; she lost utaste for her usual occupations; unconscious she frequently escaped from her; and, when lied by Helen upon her dejection, she denied it with a faint and forced smile, little in accordce with her saddened heart. Often were her ge earnest eyes fixed upon the ground, while her thoughts were wandering elsewhere; and, ben aroused from her reverie, she no longer shook aside the dark locks that shadowed her tee, and looked laughing forth, like the sun from a disparted cloud, but sought some pretext for hastily quitting the apartment, in order conceal the unbidden tear that was stealing down her cheek.

Nor was the experiment of Helen much more successful than that of her friend. Familiarity, she found, did not always breed contempt. On the contrary, the more she saw of Hunter, the sreater became her admiration of his conver-

sational powers and of his various attainments. Much too quick-sighted, however, to be blind to his faults, she saw that he was wayward, irritable, and so inconsistent in his moods that she was sometimes puzzled to decide upon his real disposition.

In the hope of conquering her prepossession by setting it at variance with her judgment and her convictions, she dwelt on the more discreditable imputations levelled against him by Mrs. Skinner, which, though they were doubtless coloured by her malice, had never been formally disproved, and might, after all, be built upon a basis of truth. Her logic convinced her judgment better than her heart.

Fully admitting his errors, she had the mortification of finding that she still loved a man whom she could not altogether esteem, and who had not afforded her the smallest intimation of reciprocating her attachment. Her pride was wounded at the discovery; she was indignant

at her inability to eradicate a feeling which she began to consider equally inexcusable and indelicate; but she was too strong-minded and vivacious to sink under this contest, like her timid and sensitive friend. Her mood was altered indeed, but it betrayed itself chiefly in the forced and artificial hilarity which she endeavoured to substitute for her failing spirits, and in an occasional peevishness and petulance wards others, engendered by her dissatisfaction with herself. Even Rose was not always excepted from her perverseness, although it was remarkable that at this juncture the two friends, by a sort of tacit compact, generally refrained from all allusion to the secret object of their joint attachment.

Nor was Hunter's situation a whit less trying and painful than that of his fair companions. As the talents and attractions of the winning, the fascinating, the irresistible Rose Mayhew received a daily development, he became more

irrecoverably enamoured, and at the same tim more fully persuaded of the impossibility c their union. Not for worlds would he hav made the gifted being, whom he thus admire with all the ardour of an enthusiastic tempera ment, the partner of his broken and desperat fortunes; and he strove, therefore, most ear nestly, though, as we have shown, unsuccess fully, to conceal from her the flame she had kindled in his bosom. He felt himself tied to a stake from which there was no escape, and the baiting to which his heart was exposed became manifest in his increased dejection alternating with splenetic moods and a more frequent neglect of his official duties, which drew down upon him the quick reproaches o the vigilant Mr. Bryant, and occasioned their squabbles to be more numerous and sharp than ever.

Thus did the blind Deity appear to have visited Eagle Wharf, only that he might in

dulge in his favourite pastime, and gratify his malice by getting up a game of cross-purposes, in which his victims, the more they strove to set themselves free, only became the more inextricably involved.

## CHAPTER IV.

"First worship God; he that forgets to pray
Bids not himself good morrow, nor good day."

T. RAND

"You seem very fond of reading,"
Helen one evening to Hunter, on his presen
a new publication which he had borrowed
the perusal of herself and her friend.

"Fond of it!" was the reply. "That is too tame and cold a word to express the thusiasm, the rapture, with which, after grovelling and hateful labours of the day mind throws off the galling yoke of busin and rushes into the green pastures of literal O Miss Owen! you, who have ever enjoyed.

the inestimable privilege of commanding your own time, and the still more precious power of suffering your unshackled thoughts to range at will; you, to whom mental delights have been a daily pastime, of which the very frequency must, in some degree, have diminished the zest; you can scarcely imagine how intense a Passion they become to one who can only indulge in them at rare and stolen intervals; one who has been conversant during the tedious day with nothing but dull or revolting material elements; who has been disgusted by vegetating in the midst of vulgar and ignorant Plodders, scarcely more congenial to his taste than the mercantile objects with which they are Mrrounded. To turn from such darkness and drudgery, and soar into the heaven of intellectial light and liberty; to feel that your soul has spread its wings, and lifted you above the dull arth into a delicious and resplendent atmo-Phere of intelligence, wherein it may expatiate

without control; to be conscious that you sitherein, like a throned Deity, Omnipotent an alone, wielding that mysterious power of thoughs which can subjugate both time and space, and penetrate whatever it touches with an electrid potency; to conjure up a thousand visions oenchantment, and yet to entertain no fear that the stores of such magic delight will ever be exhausted; this, this is a transport, a glory, are extacy, for which life has no parallel, and language has no echo."

"You describe it, as you have felt it—like a poet," said Helen, "and I can imagine your enjoyments, although the Muse has never touched me with her wand. Here is one, however, who, being a secret votary of Apollo, appears to have sympathized with you more deeply. 'See how our partner's rapt!"

She pointed to Rose, who, having intently fixed her eyes upon Hunter during his impassioned effusion, while a momentary flush lighted up her cheek, and her expressive features played in delighted accordance with the sentiments she heard, still retained her look and posture, as if she had been transfixed by his accents.

"How? what? Were you speaking to me?" cried the abashed girl, starting from her reverie, shaking a dark veil of ringlets over her face, throwing down the long fringe of her eyes, and crossing her hands upon her bosom in blushing perturbation. "I was thinking of something else. I have been so strangely absent of late, but I quite agree with Mr. Hunter. Oh no! I mean with Helen. Were you not observing ——? Yes, your soul spread its wings, did it not?"

Attempting to recover her self-possession, the nervous girl brought on one of her fits of confusion, which she was increasing by her incoherent discourse, when Helen came to her herecue, by exclaiming to their companion:—

"Having so few hours for indulging you taste, you must almost grudge every minuof your spare time that is given to company."

"Not where it combines the charms of intelect with those of pleasant and polished societs as in the present instance," replied Huntebowing to Helen, though the feeling had been mainly awakened by the talents and attractions of her friend.

It was the first time that he had ever addressed to the former any thing like a persons compliment, and his manner of conveying is was at once so pointed and deferential, that is brought a passing blush to her cheek, and accelerated the pulsation of her heart during the remainder of their colloquy.

"The conversations," continued Hunter,
with which I have been honoured, together
with the musical and other amusements in
which I have been allowed to participate since

the arrival of yourself and Miss Mayhew at Eagle Wharf, have been an unspeakable comfort to me, and would, indeed, have completely reconciled me to my lot, if certain considerations—not that I am presumptuous enough to imagine——, mine is a very peculiar fate, and not less painful than peculiar."

He stopped in evident embarrassment, and sighed deeply.

"When I sounded him as to his disposition for company," thought Helen, "he evaded my question by a compliment. Another of Mrs. Skinner's charges, and one of a much more grave nature, remains to be cleared up, and I am determined that he shall not elude it."

With this view she continued:—"I presume, sir, that your Sundays are generally devoted to literature, for I have been informed that you rarely attend any place of public worship."

I am not much surprised at this charge,"

replied Hunter, with a slight reddening of the cheek. "for our neighbourhood is infested will a set of most illiberal and intolerant personn. Peace be with them, for they have need of in Some there are, as I now learn, who go thurch, not so much that they may feel them selves in the presence of their Creator, as the they may pry around them, and note down the absence of their neighbours, for the purpose circulating against them the most injurious apersions. Most freely do I forgive them, but I cannot sympathize with their inquisitive are uncharitable devotion."

"Nor is it necessary," replied Heles "Higher and holier motives might, neverthe less, attract you to some place of public wor ship, to say nothing of the duty and example that you owe to society."

"I am not, Miss Owen, one of those pharisaical formalists who are more anxious to be seen of men than approved of Heaven, and

I have withdrawn from Salem and Bethesda chapels, because the gloomy and intolerant doctrines of its preachers appear to me so emiuently unchristian as even to desecrate the buildings that echo them. I cannot substitute bad dogmas for good works. I cannot bear to behold our noblest arts, and all the resources of wealth, lavished upon the walls of a sacred edifice, while its divine service may be delegated to a man of mean intellect and uncharitable heart. Surely, God, who gave all, deserves the best, and much more so in the mental than in the material offering: his house of prayer needs the enlightened understanding, and the benevolent feelings of the minister, rather than the sculptured stone, and the gilded decorations of the architect."

There are many other places of worship,"

resumed Helen, "where your devotional feelings would derive warmth from the talents and
fervour of the priest; and you will, surely,

admit that the Sabbath ought not to pass ov without some sort of religious observance."

"Certainly not. With me, indeed, it count so pass, even if I had no sacred fane which I could betake myself, for, never, neved of I thrill with a more heartfelt picty, than the God-built temple of Nature, where the sunbeams play around me, like angels of light fresh from heaven, their eyes twinkling in the flowers, their breath fragrant in the breeze their voices blending in faint murmurs will the hymn of the bees and the chant of the birds."

"Am I to infer, then, that, because you have so keen a sense of solitary devotion, you do no recognize the importance of public worship?"

"You are to draw no such conclusion from what I have said. I myself have, perhaps, less occasion than others to go to church, for the church comes to me, wherever I may be wandering; but the multitude, I am well aware

do not share these feelings. Unimaginative and nureflecting, they require some worship that shall address itself to their senses, and it may be doubted whether they would not quickly lose every sentiment of religion, unless it were regularly stamped upon their minds by a participation in the stated observances and solemn forms of public Sabbath service. With this conviction I feel that the duty of social is still more imperative than that of private worship; the community has a claim upon every individual, however humble, for the benefit of his example; and on these accounts I have almost always, I wish I could say invariably, attended divine service on the Sunday. In such indiscriminate meetings, the wealthy and the powerful, too apt to become exclusive and arrogant, learn humility and benevolence: after such elevating communion, the peasant—I am now about to quote one of my favourite writers rises from his knees, and feels himself a man.

He learns philosophy without its pride, and a spirit of liberty without its turoulence. Ever time social worship is celebrated, it includes virtual declaration of the rights of man."

Helen was about to make some observation in reply, when the harsh voice of Bryant, as a bruptly entered the room, grated upon be ear, like the dissonance of a broken wire it piano, and the whole party instantly becausilent. Hunter, indeed, rarely spoke in 1 presence, and his companions were too mu affected by what they had just heard, to stany other subject.

Bryant, however, though he guessed by the silence and their looks that his appearance we not particularly acceptable, stood upon a ceremony, but demanded of his clerk in peremptory language, and with a frown of dipleasure, why he had not executed the order given to him in the morning.

<sup>•</sup> Mrs. Barbauld's Works, vol. ii. p. 448.

Indignant at being thus sternly catechized before his fair friends, Hunter's countenance immediately assumed an expression of defiance; an angry altercation ensued, and the Parties presently quitted the room, wrangling loudly together.

"Well," exclaimed Helen, deviating from the reserve which had existed between the friends for some time past on the subject of Hunter, "what think you of our ci-devant knight of the rueful visage? Mrs. Skinner had a better basis than usual for her scandal, when she accused him of having latterly been an habitual absentee from chapel. And, after the specimen we have just had of his irritability and rudeness, for he bolted out of the room in fierce altercation, and without noticing either you or me, what would be your verdict as to his alleged ill-nature?"

tencies and even faults," replied Rose, " for

I do not think any positive vices have yet been brought home to him, when circumstance have thrown him into so false a position, as he is so utterly out of his element! In himpatience, he frets for a more appropriately sphere, even as the hart panteth for the wat brooks. The caged eagle and the imprisonal lion are fierce, intractable, and unhappy: be we think not the worse of them because the cannot reconcile themselves to their unworth doom."

- "I forgot that you were his champion, ar I know not where he could have found a moable and eager one."
- "I am not Mr. Hunter's champion," replications, with a slight air of reserve; "nor amaconscious of being eager, though I may 1 earnest. I merely spoke my convictions."
- "You need not have told me you were i earnest; I see it in your looks and tones. But say, my grave, sweet, and beautiful little ad

client's etourderie at the beginning of our collequy, when, with confusion and hesitation, he said that he should be completely reconciled to his lot except for certain considerations, which he left unexplained: and stammered about his not being so presumptuous as to imagine—something or other which he very provokingly left us to imagine? Now, if I were half so Poetical and funciful as he is, I could almost have dreamed from his compliments, and the tenderness of his looks and tones, that the man was actually in love with me. Ha! ha! ha!

tion," faltered Rose. "Mr. Hunter is a gentleman by birth and education, and, were I in his situation, I am sure I could not have helped falling in love with you."

"But, were you in mine, dear Rose, could you fall in love with him?"

Ĺ

"Nay, Helen, how can I enter into y can be feelings." I cannot tell—no—yes—in love Mr. Hunter—a gentleman—do not ask to Dear, dear, what am I saying?"

"My sweet Rose!" exclaimed her friest in a tone of anxious affection, "what can the matter with you? You tremble all over and look as pale as a ghost. Positively structured to the wishes I have more than our expressed, and take medical advice, for because health and spirits have been decided failing you for some time past."

"No, no," murmured Rose, making an effect to recover herself; "I felt faint for a mome—perhaps the altercation between Mr. Hunt and Mr. Bryant had a little frightened me, be I am quite—quite well, now—and very—ve happy."

As she pronounced these words, the pogirl burst into tears, and hurried out of the room, while her friend sought Mrs. Bryant 1 request that a physician might be summoned, to decide upon the nature of her complaint and suggest the proper remedies.

## CHAPTER V.

"There's one youder, and carried to prison, w five thousand of you all."

SHARS

A FEW days after this conversation, as and Rose were sitting together, a timic at the door was heard, and the servant to announce Mrs. Hunter, who stole i room with a significant smile upon her fe exclaiming, as she glanced round the apart. What! nobody else here? neither! Mrs. Bryant? Well, I am glad of when one has a secret that one partiwishes to keep, I do think the fewer the tells it to the better, especially if yo

not depend upon them — don't you, Miss Owen?"

"That is a proposition upon which I would not venture to decide without due deliberation," said Helen, in her bantering strain; "but upon the first blush of the question, I should feel rather inclined to agree with you."

Alfred, as they are always sneering and girding thim for his giving up his time to such pursuits. I believe I stated that neither of them have any great turn that way, themselves."

"You did," said Helen; "but you omitted mention what way."

"Did I? only think of my being so thoughtless! The fact is, I have made a little discovery about dear Alfred, who has lately, limed, been returning to his old loves, and has been secretly courting—la, Miss Mayhew, how we the colour flushes up into your face, and how beautiful it makes you look! what a pity you hav'n't always got such a nice colour, instead of being so pale and sickly!"

"I do not exactly see what my friend scomplexion can have to do with Mr. Hunter courtship," said Helen, assuming an air of indifference, though she was all impatience for the expected disclosure.

"No more do I, especially as I had on I discovered that he had been secretly courting, the Muse. You know I told you he was poet, although he has written little or nothing since our troubles, and, Heaven knows, the have been enough to—la! there's mackar crying three a-shilling; well, that's not dear However, I must tell you the story. I washing out his neckcloths early this morn

ing, not so much to save the expense, but Harriet and I can get them up so much better than the laundress, and Alfred ties his well and so genteelly, and it makes such a difference in a man's appearance, though Alfred, I am proud to say, always looks like a gentleman -Well, I was thinking of my dear boy, and of the degrading occupation to which he was reduced, so different from what he had a right to expect, when the tears stole down my cheeks, without my knowing it, and fell into the tub, and it did appear to me so very ridiculous that they should be wasted in that way, by dropping into the soapsuds, that I could not help bursting into a fit of laughter, though I believe I was half crying all the time. So Harriet came running in to know what was the matter, for God knows I hardly ever laugh now, though I was once merry enough; and then she told me that two strangers had called for Alfred immediately after breakfast, and he had gone out with them; so I went into he is absent to rights, for when he is absent thing or other for him, and there upon the table what should I see but—la, what a beauti ful collar, Miss Owen!—did you work it your—self?—such a neat little sprig all round them border!—Let me see—where was I?"

"You had just got out of the washing-tube and we left you on the table," said Helen.

"Ay, so I was; well, what should I discover on the table but this paper, which I snatched up, and then ran down stairs to speak to Mrs. Tibbs, the landlady, about oiling the jack, it does make such a horrid creaking, and if there is one noise I hate more than another, it is "

"But the paper?" interposed both her apditors simultaneously—"what did it contain?"

"Why, my dears, some verses, which I will read to you, though Alfred evidently left them unfinished, and I dare say will make them much \*tier when he comes to polish them up. I 1't imagine, for my part, how he could think it all, and make the lines rhyme together, ich I am sure I could never do for the life me."

The old lady then adjusted her spectacles, d, with an apprehensiveness and propriety, ach more correct than could have been antipated from the rambling silliness of her dissurae, read a devotional effusion of considerate length.

"Isn't it beautiful?" asked the delighted other, at its conclusion.—"And only think poor Alfred, who can write such nice verses, hyming at the end, being compelled to the entries all day long in a stupid journal deleger, where there isn't a single rhyme; else to stand beside the great scales, and a down the weights of nasty casks of tallow I turpentine!"

'I admire Mr. Hunter's poetry," said Helen,

"and I sincerely rejoice that he has found so delightful a solace in the midst of his many trials."

"Well, now, that's very kind of you, dear Miss Owen, and, for my part, I believe it was meant by Heaven that there should be a consolation of some sort under all our afflictions. Now, for instance, they have just raised the price of candles, but then the days are getting longer, and we shan't burn so many, which is all owing to the Providence that watches over us."

"I quite agree with you that every sorrow has its solace," said Helen, whose sympathy and kindlier feelings had subdued, for the moment, all her propensity to joking. "Our reverses often produce blessings, as the night brings forth the morning; and I sincerely hope that you and your family will soon emerge from beneath your present cloud, into brighter and better days."

"Thank you, thank you, my sweet Miss

ment, which continued for some minutes after Mrs. Hunter had quitted the room, was broken by Helen's exclaiming—"I believe you were right, my darling Rose de Meaux! Out knight of the quill may have peculiar notions, but irreligious he is not; and so far the puritanical Mrs. Skinner stands convicted, for the five hundredth time, of most uncharitable detraction. These verses have evidently been drawn forth by our late conversation on the subject."

"I never believed the charge," said Rose, "for I knew Mr. Hunter to be a man of talent and a poet, both of which I consider irreconcileable with a want of devotion. He seems, moreover, if his mother and sister may be credited, to be correct in his conduct, and amiable in his affections, which is, in fact, to be practically pious."

"The testimony of his family is rather creditable to themselves than to him," said

Helen, who, somehow or other, always spoke the most disparagingly of Hunter, when she secretly felt the most prepossessed in his favour. "Then you must recollect, dear Rose, that Mrs. Skinner's further charges of his addiction to low company, and his occasional deep potations, remain yet to be cleared up."

"I have no doubt they are quite as false as his imputed irreligion," replied Rose, as she quitted the room, anxious to lose no time in writing down the verses which she had partly committed to memory.

"My friend seems determined to vindicate him upon every occasion," whispered Helen to herself. "This is ridiculous enough; but, judging all the world by her own pure and benevolent heart, she cannot be brought to harbour an unfavourable impression of any one. After all, what can it signify to me whether the man be a Jonathan Wild or a Sir

Charles Grandison? What's he to Hecuba Of Hecuba to him? Nothing. Wherefore, as nothing can come of nothing, I will waste more time upon the subject, but resume my book."

but her thoughts, notwithstanding her recent decision as to the nullity of the inquiry, still continued to balance the pros and cons of Hunter's character, in which occupation she had remained about half an hour, without turning over a single leaf, when the door was abruptly thrown open, and Mrs. Hunter rushed into the room, her usually placed face flushed with heat and agitation, and discoloured with tears.

"Mr. Bryant! where is Mr. Bryant?" she exclaimed, panting for breath and looking wildly round the room.

"He is gone out," said Helen; "he and my aunt crossed the river early this morning to visit some friends on the opposite bank. But you tremble; my dear madam, pray sit down what has disturbed you thus?"

"0, Miss Owen! I am a wretched, lost woman!" cried the visitant, throwing herself into a chair. "What will become of me? what will become of poor Harriet? I shall never hold up my head again — My son, my dear son! he was our sole support—he was our only—"

Unable to complete the sentence, she buried herface in her hands, and, while the fresh-gushing tears trickled through her fingers, swayed her head backwards and forwards in an agony of grief.

"What can possibly have happened?" demanded Helen, her voice and look attesting the agitated state of her feelings.

"The worst, the worst, the very worst that could have happened — my precious, my kind-hearted boy! I have lost—I have lost my dear Alfred."

"Gracious Heaven "ejaculated Helen, with a cry of terror and amazement, "I saw him only yesterday in perfect health."

"In health!" repeated the mother, looking up at the exclamation she had heard; "well, so he is now, I hope and trust; only they have arrested him for debt and thrown him into prison, and, I know not, poor as we all are, how he is ever to be got out again. Those horrid men, with whom he went away so early this morning, were bailiffs, and he wouldn't mention it for fear of alarming us, especially as he hoped to get assistance from a friend, in which he has been disappointed. But, la! Miss Owen, what is the matter with you? How your colour comes and goes, and how you tremble and pant for breath, just as little Miss Mayhew did, when I talked of Alfred's courting the Muse. I fear I must have frightened you out of your wits, and no wonder, for I am almost scared out of my own. My poor, dear Alfred! by suggesting that Mr. Bryant would less exert himself to procure her son charge.

"That is what I came to petition for, the mother; "but I have no hope of succ none whatever. Alfred is already indehim for an advance of salary; they has had a fresh quarrel together; and Mr. warned both him and me, only a few day that, if he could not manage to live with income, he should send him trooping; we no other friends in the world, and as raising eighty pounds—"

"Eighty pounds!" interposed Helen that the whole amount of the debt for whas been arrested?"

"Yes; but we are as unable to pay it had been a thousand."

Overcome by surprise and pleasure intelligence, for she had anticipated som sum, Helen could not suppress a laugh

of my father, has always been so liberal that has enabled me to make a purse of my ow In this writing-desk I have a bank-note of of hundred pounds which I was just about to my little separate investment, but which shall think a thousand times better bestowe if you will do me the favour of accepting You can repay me, you know, at some future day, when you get a prize in the lottery, Mr. Hunter, if I mistake not, occasionally the his fortune in that way."

With these words she unlocked the desk handed over the bank-note to her compress, looked on in a and amazed bewilderment, as if she dist the evidence of her senses. When, he her doubts were dispelled, she melted ir of gratitude, and sobbed in a broke "God bless you! God bless you, do Owen! feel my heart—that must the for I can scarcely speak—I am almost

After a brief interval, during which she continued to gaze wistfully at the note, with the tears glistening in her eyes, she added, "And yet I ought not to take this money without knowing how I am to repay it. Alfred, it is true, is constantly speculating in the Lottery, which is one cause of his present embarrassment; but it is not for himself — it is all for me and Harriet, in the hope of placing us in a more comfortable situation. But, alas! alas! he is always unfortunate—there is no luck for any of our family; we shall never be enabled to get out of your debt."

"Then do me the favour to accept this trifle a little token of friendship," said Helen, who ad only alluded to repayment from motives of lelicacy, although her simple-hearted visitant and taken her words in a literal sense.

hrowing her arms round her neck and kissing er. "I don't mind taking it from you, because

I should have delighted in giving it to you; and though I cannot express my gratitude, my dear Alfred, who is as eloquent as he is warmhearted, will hurry hither, I am sure, the moment he is at liberty, to offer—"

"Nay, nay," interrupted Helen, blushing, "I forgot to make one positive stipulation. This little transaction must remain a secret between you and me. It must be concealed from every body, and particularly from Mr. Hunter."

"Well, my dear Miss Owen! if you will have it so, I must obey, and indeed I shall be glad to hide it from Mr. Bryant, for fear of the consequences. They quarrel enough, as it is; but I am sure it cannot be Alfred's fault, for he is the kindest creature in the world. Dear! dear! what shall I say to account for his absence?"

"You had better lose no time in effecting his liberation," observed Helen.

## CHAPTER VI.

"———Beauty, pomp,
With every sensuality our giddiness
Doth frame an idol—are inconstant friends,
When any troubled passion makes us halt
On the unguarded castle of the mind."

SEVERAL trifling circumstances, which in their minuteness would have escaped the notice of a male eye, convinced Helen that Mary Lomax had been strongly prepossessed, even at their first interview, in favour of Evelyn Barlow, and the result quickly proved the truth of her conclusions. Not having the same clue, however, to the feelings of the other sex, nor the same opportunities of observation, she did not so soon detect that the predilection was reciprocal, and that a mutual at-

tachment had sprung up between them, of which the progress was much more rapid than might have been anticipated from the diffident character of both parties.

Women, who may be timid without reproach, are more especially prone to admire the display of an opposite quality in those men whose appearance and conformation seem hardly compatible with mental energy and a daring hardihood. Barlow was an instance of combination; he possessed, moreover, a gular suavity and gentleness of demeanour, nelodious, but earnest and impressive voice, ether with a retiring, unobtrusive, manner, often to be encountered in the young men of the present school.

To Mary this blending of the manly in Pirit with a tincture of the feminine in feeling and deportment seemed an union of the best qualities peculiar to either sex, which she admired for its rarity, and esteemed for its worth,

especially when subsequent inquiries confirmed all her predilections. As it has been stated that she herself, beneath a sedate and almost grave exterior, possessed a profound susceptibility, it will excite no surprise that, when the hitherto-sealed fountain of her affections had found a channel, it should be rapid and exuberant in its flow. The almost daily visits of Barlow, his deferential demeanour, for true love ever contemplates its object with a feeling that approaches to religious homage, and, above = all, the silent courtship of his eyes, soon convinced her of his attachment; nor, while her= heart fully responded to the tenderness she had inspired, was she insensible to the peculiar eligibility of the match, should he make regular declaration of love. Upon almost every subject there existed between them > perfect conformity of opinion; his good qualities were admitted by all; his family were respectable and wealthy; and their residence.

ich was at an easy distance, would scarcely interfere with the discharge of her filial duties, ould she be called upon to preside over an eighbard.

Cypress House, with its grandeur and its loom, its alternations of intemperate excess, coody melancholy, and fierce strife between er parents, had become so thoroughly dis-Tasteful to her, that nothing could have reconciled her to her lot, but a sense of duty and an innate strength of mind. Abundaut, therefore, and cogent, were the reasons for wishing to quit her present abode, while she had no countervailing motive for attaching her to it, except her affection for her brother Benjamin, whose health, which at first appeared to have been strengthened by the change of air, had again begun to give way. She reflected, however, that, if she became a resident in the immediate vicinity, she would still be enabled to



see him as often as she wished. Her mother, whatever might be her state of mind, never relaxed for a single instant her watchful and anxious ministerings to her darling boy; nor did Mary, although she noticed his increasing debility, imagine him to be affected with any very serious malady.

Barlow's parents, who had called at Cypress House to return thanks for the attentions lavished upon him, and who had enjoyed various subsequent opportunities of becoming better acquainted with Mary, were scarcely less pleased with her than their son, and eagerly gave their assent to his soliciting her hand in marriage. His constitutional diffidence would not allow him to propose to her in a personal interview; he made his offer, therefore, in a letter, worded with a characteristic frankness and fervour; and Mary, who was equally superior to the affected coyness of the prude, and the silly caprices of the coquette,

which, having been previously submitted to the inspection of her father and mother, had met their entire and delighted concur-

What say you now, Joel?" demanded Mrs. Lomax, who, as a set-off against the ma-Difold annoyances and miseries entailed upon themselves by their joint crime, delighted to have an opportunity of dwelling upon its in-Calculable advantages to their children — What say you now? Were we not wise to che deed? It is doubtful whether we should even have saved the life of our darling Benjamin. and mine is wrapped up in his, had he not been enabled to command all the advantages of inoccupation, and the luxuries of wealth, bessides having a physician in almost daily attendance upon him. But for the deed, for which you are mainly indebted to me, we must have seen our angel boy, spite of his delicate health, condemned to some hateful drudgery, not less miserable, humiliating, and noxious, than that from which you yourself have been redeemed. We must have endured the anguish, the indescribable torture, of seeing him pining and wasting away before our eyes, knowing that toil and confinement were accelerating his death, and yet totally without the means of preventing so cruel, so heart-withering, a sacrifice."

"Very true, very true," mumbled the husband; whose senses were often muddled, even in the morning, from the depth of his overnight's potations.

"And our dear Mary," resumed the wife—
"but for the deed, what would have been her
fate? Of her marriage there would not have
been the smallest chance, unless she had chosen
to steep herself to the lips in poverty and degradation, by accepting the dirty hand of some
low mechanic. No, she must have worn out

her eyes as a sempstress, or have continued to starve upon the paltry pittance which she was sometimes enabled to pick up by copying music for the shops; whereas she will now be united to a gentleman of fortune — the object of her fond attachment; she will occupy a handsome house, ride in her own carriage, dwell in our immediate vicinity, and thus afford us not only the solace of her society, but the delight of witnessing her happiness."

The husband groaned, as he exclaimed with a reproachful look, "She will never witness our's—not mine, at least."

drine, and a cowardly self-tormentor. Would you have been happier, think you, had you not done the deed? Your breaking health and your unsteady hand were daily incapacitating you more and more for your situation of a clerk; and to what would you have betaken yourself after the death of Hoffman, and the

expenditure of his pitiful legacy? Old, Inform, and useless, you must have begged your bread in the public streets, unless you had thought fit to accompany your family to the Poor House."

"Perhaps so; but I should not have been miserable and half mad; I should not have been beset with terrors in the day, and haunted with ghastly visions at night that scare me from my sleep; I should not have found life a burden, and yet have been afraid to die."

"What so dastardly a spirit as your's might have found or imagined, I cannot undertake to determine: I only know that you would not have found wealth, station, respect, equipage, sumptuous dinners, and rare wines, all of which you at present enjoy."

"No such thing, Jane; I use them, but I do not enjoy them; I enjoy nothing. Nature never meant me to be a guilty man, for I have not a heart of iron in my bosom. Had I known

have laid down my life at once, rather than live I do now in the perpetual, the horrible dread of detection and the gallows. Oh, that appalling scene at the Old Bailey! It pursues me—it stands before me whichever way I look; if I shut my eyes I still distinctly see it; and in my dreams I feel the accursed halter suffocating and throttling me, and undergo an almost nightly execution."

nightmare from your thoughts? I should have supposed that the utter groundlessness of your Past terrors would have prevented their recurrence. Which of your idle apprehensions has been confirmed? Not a single one. Who comes forward to accuse us, or to dispute our claim to the fine fortune which we have every reason to presume we shall transmit undisputed to our dear children? Nobody. Consider how many months have now elapsed, and no proceedings

have been instituted. Of Edward Ruddock whear nothing. Had he intended to challenge our right, he would have been here long again the has probably been killed by the pestilential climate of South America; and, as to your be leaguering scarecrow, the phantom of a heater and terrified imagination, the vision of the area, and the tall thin gentleman,—."

"Jane! Jane! for Heaven's sake, make ready is he conjured up before me. Why why will you not remove the picture that hangs over the fire-place in the dining-room? I have spoken of it before, and would have done is myself, but that I feared to approach it."

"What! the fine painting of Satan after the Fall? How does it offend you?"

"Its eyes are like those of the mysterious stranger whom I *last* saw at the Old Bailey. They glare at me menacingly, they are fixed upon me wherever I stand; and sometimes methe frightful figure brandishes its spear, m its frame, and chases me round the

this is the phantasmagoria seen through sof wine; this is one of your afterisions. If you would not stupify by intoxication, Satan would remain n his frame. However, the picture nstantly removed."

k you, thank you," exclaimed Loo seemed to feel as if he had been reom one of his spectral enemies.

listen to me attentively," resumed the Mr. Barlow and his family are likely e frequent visitants at Cypress House he courtship of Evelyn and Mary. not, I implore you, observe any thing dissatisfy them with the match, and prompt them to break it off. For the let our bickerings and wranglings be ad; they are always vain and dangerous,

and now they would be more especially mischievous, since few people like to connect themselves with a disunited family; and Evely Barlow, if I mistake not, conceals much penetration beneath a shy and unobservant mannes. Whatever may be our own present feelings continue doom, let us but secure, by this most activantageous marriage, the happiness of our deem Mary, who is ardently attached to Evelyn Barlow, and we shall be so far independent of fate we shall not, at all events, have perpetrated crime in vain."

There was no hypocrisy in this speech 
Mrs. Lomax, who really felt what she sai 
Benjamin was her darling child; but her ma
ternal feelings towards Mary, though sometimal
interrupted, and never extended to her in the 
fair proportion, were not by any means oblaterated; and, notwithstanding the occasions 
harshness with which she had recently treated 
her, she admired the filial forbearance with

which she submitted to parental partiality and injustice. The father's morbid state of mind made him a party to this maltreatment; but he both loved and respected his daughter, and his voice trembled with deep emotion, as he said, in reply to his wife's admonition:—"Dear, dear Mary! there is not a better girl breathing. It will, indeed, be a great consolation to know that the fatal deed has at least secured her happiness, and I would not for worlds do any thing that should blight her present prospects."

"Then moderate, I beseech you, your perilous potations, for, when you are overcome with wine, you know not what you say or do. Your rambling discourse must fill the minds of the servants, and, sometimes, I fear, of our visitants, with strange surmises, of which no one can foresee the consequences; while your spectral dreams and night-walkings are more likely to be produced by the fumes of wine than by the misgivings of your conscience.

Command yourself; endeavour to correct weakness, if not for my sake and your for that of our dear Mary, whose whole life may now be said to depend upon exercising a temporary command over failings."

"And I should be a greater wretce villain even than I am," said Lomax emerally, "were I to entail misery upon my by any indulgence or indiscretion which the power to control. Bear with me, a sist me, Jane, instead of irritating my was temper by contemptuous taunts and upings, and I will do my best. At times all command over my words or actions, is not always with drinking; and, if it you should excuse an oblivion to which fly as a refuge from wretchedness."

"I will excuse all your past indiscreti you will try to amend them in future."

"I will promise to make the attemp

if you will only whisper in my ear, when I am drinking too freely, that our dear Mary's happiness is at stake, I think I shall have resolution enough to push the bottle from me."

To this determination Lomax adhered with an inflexibility that showed him still to possess efficient command over himself, when he chose to exercise it; and the amended health, both of body and mind, that resulted from a strict temperance, not only enabled him to struggle better with his apprehensions during the day, but diminished the frequency of the hideous phantasms by which his repose at night had so often been disturbed. Unbroken sleep still further corroborating his faculties, enabled him to listen with complacency to the arguments of his wife, who now substituting conciliation and reasoning for menace and contempt, endeavoured most strenuously to convince him that all his fears and fancies were vai n.

By this judicious treatment she succeede resuming her empire, and in soothing, for moment, the terrors of a pusillanimous m and the stings of a guilty conscience. prospect of Mary's advantageous establishm and of the certain happiness that it we secure to her, operated as a welcome lulling Nepenthe on the perturbed spirit both her parents, who, during the court that now ensued, enjoyed a respite that peared a perfect Elysium, when contra with their previous alarm, exacerbation, anguish.

## CHAPTER VII.

"Oh, Love! how are thy precious, sweetest moments
Thus ever crossed, thus vexed with disappointment!"
Rows.

For a few days, Mrs. Hunter had persisted, although with very mysterious and significant looks, in refusing to satisfy the inquiries of her son as to the donor of the hundred pounds, by which his liberation from prison had been quickly and so unexpectedly effected; but, being from her natural simplicity and openness very ill calculated for concealments of any sort, she at length suffered her secret to looze out. Had it been any other person, she might have hesitated, but Alfred, she argued,

was so particularly trustworthy, that she was sure even Miss Owen herself would not object to his knowing the whole affair, if it we divulged to him in strict confidence.

Thus fully justified, as she thought, will also her promise, the good woman imparted to him the name of his benefactres enlarging upon the handsome manner in whice the boon had been conferred, as well as upo its important effects in screening him from the displeasure of Mr. Bryant, to whom his arresseranced unknown.

"And now, my dear Alfred," continued the fond parent, "now that I am disburthening my bosom of its secrets, which I hate to keep there, because they are just like so many birds in a cage, fretting at their confinement, and longing to pop out and effect their escape, I must tell you of a discovery that I have made, and which I dare say you will be not a little surprised to hear."

\*I am all attention," said the son, "for I see by your countenance that it is of pleasant import, and to such tidings I am but seldom called to listen."

"No, indeed, my poor dear Alfred! you have nothing but annoyances and vexations to endure, and most sincerely do I wish—la! there's a spot of ink upon the frill of your new shirt! I wish you wouldn't hold your pen in your mouth. Dear! dear! where did I put my salt of lemons?"

"My vexations and annoyances, dear mother, are nothing, nothing whatever: I deserve them all. It is your privations and the sorrows of our dear pining Harriet that wring my heart, and, as I sometimes fear, have irritated and coursed my temper."

Bless me, Alfred! don't talk in that distressing way. I have no privations; I never was so happy in my life—nothing in the world to worry me, that is to say, just now, for there is no rent coming due these two months! Harriet will soon get over her low spirits, poor girl! and as to your temper, every body says it is exactly like mine; and whatever may be my other faults, I know myself to be so mild and gentle, that if any body else were to call you ill-natured, I could almost feel in my heart to scratch their eyes out."

"You have forgotten the secret that you were about to impart to me."

"Secret! had I a secret? well, I vow and declare I had almost forgotten all about it. Now, my dear Alfred, listen to me with all your ears." Here she drew her chair close to that of her son, took his hand, and, looking in his face, with an expression of arch and triumphant affection, continued—"Now that I have disclosed to you the name of your benefactress, tell me, can you or can you not give a shrewd guess at her motive for the gift?"

"Assuredly I can. I presume her to have been actuated by a natural benevolence."

"A natural fiddlestick! Pooh, pooh! don't tell me. Generous she may be, but young ladies seldom bestow such large sums upon handsome and accomplished young men without—now don't start and look angry, dear Alfred; you can't deny that you are both handsome and accomplished—and young ladies, I repeat, seldom make such liberal donations without some feeling a leetle more warm and tender than mere bountifulness of disposition."

"Ridiculous! this is the creation of your own overweening fancy, and I must entreat that you will never give utterance to a thought which is alike painful to me, and disparaging to Miss Owen."

"Well, now, I call that ridiculous, if you please. I don't know why it should be painful to you, and I am sure it cannot be dis-

paraging to Miss Owen. Your family better than her's, though we are down in the world at present. You are a gentleman borand bred, and though——"

"Tush, madam! for Heaven's sake no morof this. You forget that Miss Owen is are
heiress, and that I am degraded to a servilsituation. Pray let us change the subjectBe assured that you have drawn a most erroneous conclusion from a single act obenevolence."

"Don't tell me, Alfred; I know better—Ah! you should have seen her when I told—her of your being arrested. She turned as—pale as ashes, and panted for breath, and—became so agitated, that I thought she would—have gone into hysterics. Was that a simple—feeling of charity? No, no; we women are not so easily to be deceived in one another's emotions. Having been in love myself, I know what it is—I remember, as well as if it were

Only yesterday, when your poor dear father, who is now among the saints in heaven, was paying me his addresses, and fell from his horse, or rather the beast tumbled with him, for he was an excellent horseman, a friend called to tell me of the accident, and after desiring me to arm myself with all my fortitude, exclaimed, in a solemn voice——Look! look! Tabby has caught a mouse, I do declare!

—nay, you shall not torment the poor creature.

Up jumped the kind-hearted Mrs. Hunter, and, after declaring that, although these little Pilferers were a sad plague to her, she could not bear to see them worried to death, she liberated the intended victim, which quickly made its escape, consoled Tabby for the loss by a lump of sugar, and was about to resume her story, when her son, who had often heard it before, assured her that her feelings upon the interesting occasion, to which she had

alluded, could not afford a faithful clue to those of Miss Owen, and implored her once more not to lend herself to a groundless delusion, which must wear an appearance of the vainest presumption, and the most inexcusable ingratitude, should it ever come to the knowledge of their benefactress.

"Well, well," said the mother, with a look of significant obstinacy, "I am very willing to hold my tongue, but you cannot argue me out of my opinion. I will not refer to the subject, even in the remotest manner, since you desire me not; but, say what you will, I am confident, and indeed I should wonder if it were otherwise, that a certain young lady who shall be mameless is in love with a certain young gentleman who shall be equally nameless."

"Gentleman!" exclaimed Alfred, smiling in bitter spirit. "Are you alluding to Jacob Bryant's Wharf-clerk?"

"I am alluding to one who, let him fill what

though I say it that shouldn't say it, and, therefore, you must not be seen with this inkspot upon your frill. Ah! I hope one of these days to see you restored to the rank of a gentleman, and conducting yourself as such, and then you will never, please God, have occasion to touch these nasty pens. Come along with me, and I will look for the salt of lemons. I do think I must have put it in the little drawer, under the beauffet, where I lock up the silver teapot and spoons — don't you, dear A 1 fred 2"

"I do not take up notions without some sis to support them," replied the son, with faint smile; "therefore, I must be excused om offering a guess on the subject."

Notwithstanding the opinion he had thus onfidently expressed, Hunter's demeanour wards Helen, influenced by a heartfelt gratitude for her recent generosity, uncon-

sciously assumed a more tender and deferent character than had hitherto been his work Never had he appeared to her to display town talents to half so much advantage as wheeleriving an evident gratification from elicitim her's, he sate by her side, gazing upon her wina look of respectful homage, asking her opini upon various points of literature and art, ferring to her judgment, not with a servacquiescence, but with the air of one who really grateful for being enlightened, or yieling himself heartily, when she indulged her vivacious sallies, to the influence of her sporti wit.

From any undue conceit Helen was as fracture as most girls, but she had the foibles are feelings of our common nature; and it we hardly, therefore, to be expected that she should be insensible to this most refined andelicate of all flattery, coming from a major acknowledged talents, who had already made

a much deeper impression upon her heart than she herself suspected.

By the sedulity of his homage to Helen, Hunter in the mean time had succeeded in persuading Rose, whatever she might have once suspected to the contrary, that his admiration and his regards were now diverted from herself and exclusively engrossed by her friend. The humility which is ever the concomitant of real merit and genius prevented her from being in the smallest degree surprised at this conviction, although it could not entirely obviate the secret Pang by which it was accompanied. Not only did it seem to her perfectly natural that the vivacity, accomplishments, and amiability, of her friend should eclipse her own poor attractions, fading away as they evidently were under the withering influence of melancholy and ill health; but she clearly perceived and readily acknowled ged that the attachment which, if directed towards herself, scarcely admitted the possibility

of any satisfactory result, became sanction when Helen was its object, by every considerat of worldly prudence and discretion. Recollect the birth, education, and personal recommend tions of Hunter, she saw nothing whatever his reduced circumstances that should de him from aspiring to the hand of Helen; i deed, there were innumerable motives, both his own situation and in that of his fami which must manifestly prompt him to desire t alliance. In the firm persuasion that its a complishment would secure the happiness two parties, to one of whom she owed a long debt of gratitude, while her heart was not le tenderly interested in the welfare of the other the generous girl determined to devote he influence and good offices to the promotion o their union.

With all the perseverance of high principle—
all the ardour of a generous and determined
self-sacrifice, she struggled against her feelings—

her appearance every day exhibiting with greater obviousness the ravages of the contest in which she was engaged. It seemed as if this delicate and fragile creature, who, even in her healthier state, rather resembled a spirit than an inhabitant of earth, was now, indeed, about to assume an etherial form, and to pass away into some new element better adapted to the purity of her mind, and the transparent tenuity of her frame.

Mrs. Hunter, with all her simplicity, had a ternal eye to the main chance where her son concerned; and, as she retained her conviction of Helen's prepossession, she failed not sing the praises of his domestic virtues, and extenuate the peccadilloes into which he had been betrayed. Her regard for veracity, however, would not allow her to conceal the pecuniary difficulties in which he was perpetually involving them, an indiscretion which the good lady condemned and vindicated in the

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peared, from their present embarrassments b tribing sum, which Helen instantly resolved advance, though she hesitated to disclose h purpose, and could not immediately decide up the mode of effecting it.

From a closer observation of Mrs. Huntewhose character, indeed, was almost as easy
be read as a printed book, she not only doubteher power to retain a secret, but began to apprehend that her own motives in the proposed donation were very likely to be misinterpreted. Hashe said detected, she would, perhaps, have used
more appropriate term. Not choosing to subject herself to any such injurious suspicion
and afraid that she might be discovered by hehand-writing, should she transmit her gift in
cover addressed by herself, she finally concluded, after due cogitation, to avail herself of
Rose's agency, as the most effectual mode for
concealing the source of the gift. The venial

From an old friend of Mrs. Hunter's family,"

would probably direct the suspicions of that

lady into some other quarter, and, if they

were turned towards herself, it was easy,

with the help of a little casuistry, to deny

that she had either written or forwarded the

letter.

Having formed this resolution, she hastened
Rose's apartment, and, with a flush upon
her features, which seemed to confirm the anger
he had assumed, exclaimed, as she threw herlef into a chair:—"Well! I have no patience
hatever with this extravagant, thoughtless,
unfeeling Mr. Hunter. His conduct is really
hominable, and deserves to be exposed. Were
it the first, or even the second time, it might
be overlooked, but these reiterated indiscretions
are unpardonable, scandalous! Surely he might
remember the claims of his family, even if he
chooses to forget what is due to himself."

"Alas! what new offence has he con her mitted?" demanded Rose eagerly, while he has he con her mitted?" demanded Rose eagerly, while he has he con her her mitted?"

"The worst species of new offence—the repetition of an old one for which he has already suffered. By his extravagance and misconduct, and he has once more exposed his affectionate mother and amiable sister to embarrassments of the most humiliating nature."

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"Ah, dear Helen! is it not some extenuation of his fault that he was born to independence? Nothing so difficult, especially for a young man, as to discard expensive habits, and suddenly practice a rigid thrift."

"Ridiculous! Sensible people will always adapt themselves to their circumstances; and there are thousands who maintain themselves and their families in decent comfort, upon a much narrower income than that of Mr. Hunter."

"Yes, but they have never known any better

it is no novelty; it has been the practice of their whole life; but to Mr. Hunter it is a new and painful task, and one which it must be exceedingly difficult to perform when every recollection of the past tempts him to forget the present."

duty, and you will not surely excuse its non-performance, when it involves the peace and respectability of a whole family. Oh! I have no patience with him! especially as I have respect that his mother and tister often deny themselves comforts, that they may provide him little luxuries and indultinces. However, I came not hither to talk of Mr. Hunter, indeed I care not how rarely his mane is mentioned, but to have a little chat with you about the old lady, whose painful condition I most sincerely commiserate, especially when I call to mind how trying and irk-

some it must be for one who has moved in a better sphere to be reduced in life, and obliged to contend with all the hardships of comparative poverty."

"You said, just now, that sensible peop would always adapt themselves to their circus stances."

"I was speaking then of young men, whom the rough trials of life are a mere partime, and who ought to conform themselves their station, however humble, without disculty. With an elderly female the case is vere different. Mrs. Hunter, nevertheless, is reconsided to her lowly lot, and never seems to regard it, except on the account of her undeserving some She is a most estimable person; a kinder and more single-hearted woman I never knew; and poor Harriet, whose depression of spirits I can now well explain, is really a most intelligent and amiable girl. I cannot bear to see such deserving persons exposed to the annoyance of

duns for a mere trifle; and I was thinking, therefore, my sweet little Rose de Meaux, of sending them, anonymously, of course, a sufficient sum to extricate them from their immediate difficulties."

Rose, pressing her friend's hand to her heart, bile she glowed with the pleasure that always the filled her whole sensitive frame at the mention of any generous deed.

"Nay," resumed Helen, "you mean it uld be utterly unworthy of me to act otherwise, the amount being so insignificant. I need not add that the transaction must remain secret between you and me. From considerations of delicacy, I shall send the money monymously, and, as my hand-writing is known to Mrs. Hunter, I wish you to direct the envelope, lest the good lady should attribute my interference to improper motives."

"To improper motives! By what m

"Psha! I meant to say erroneous.
would not wish — people are so apt ——
constructions are very annoying — surel
can understand my feelings."

"I believe I do," said Rose with a smile; "and I will willingly lend my a ance to your benevolent views. It will great relief to poor Mr. Hunter's mind t that his family ——."

"Oh! do n't mention his feelings! h serves to be punished, were it ten tim much. Say no more about him, but come me to my room, and I will instruct you to write on the inside of the cover."

Here the conversation ended for the prebut enough had been said to convince that, although Helen's natural benevo might have prompted her to assist the m and daughter, her sympathies were

## CHAPTER VIII.

"The hearts of old gave hands;
But now our heraldry is—hands, not hearts."

OTHER

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HOWEVER adroitly Rose might acquit self of the little commission thus entrusted to her, she could not effectually succeed in how dwinking Mrs. Hunter, whose penetration, so usually very keen, was quickened by her succeed picion of Helen's latent attachment to her son.

In less than ten minutes after having received the last-mentioned letter, she bustled into the sitting-room at Eagle Wharf, her be evolent countenance radiant with surprise and complacency, as she exclaimed: "Well, my

these words in a strange handwriting, 'Fron an old friend of Mrs. Hunter's family.'"

"Some one, doubtless, with whom you have been intimately acquainted in former days."

Cannot you guess whence it comes?"

"La, dear, yes! I can guess fast enough at replied Mrs. Hunter, smiling significantly at her companion, who, in spite of her assum and nonchalance, again blushed as she hastily to claimed—

"Moving in the sphere you formerly occpied, I dare say you must have known manfriends both able and willing to confer up
you so trifling an act of courtesy."

"Why, that is likely enough, for I knew least a dozen to whom I would gladly have shown such a kindness, supposing our circumstances to have been reversed; but, you see none of our former acquaintance know where to find us out, for Alfred cannot bear that any of them should see us in our present reduced

whatever it might be to you. It comes, assure you, in the very nick of time, and who ever may be my benefactor or benefactress, don't know which it is, I sincerely hope the Heaven will shower down—La! there is shower falling, I do declare, for the people yonder boat have got their umbrellas up, and less, and my best bonnet too! It did spillittle just as I got to the Wharf, but I was hopes it had all blown over. However, I shat stay here till it's fine, the rain may depend up that!"

The threatened danger of her bonnet nonly drove out of the good lady's head the completion of her prayer, but even the puport of her visit, to which she alluded none, but sat watching and upbraiding the shower, with sundry exclamations of, "Well, if ever!" until she availed herself of a gleam

She again bustled into the room—"it's no she again bustled into the room—"it's no your denying the fact, and still less your desiring me never to allude to the subject, though I am very willing to avoid all mention of names. 'Faint heart never won fair lady.' Only get courage enough, dear Alfred, to make the attempt, and I will answer for your success; and even if you fail, we are only where we were."

Fardon me, madam; we shall have forfeited the friendship of Miss Owen, and I shall have lost my situation at the Wharf, for Mrs. Bryant will hardly retain me after such an instance of presumption."

better blood, and much more of a gentleman than he or any of his family, and, if he chooses to take offence, let him take it. We can scarcely be worse off than we are already, for there is hardly a day passes that I am not

than by offering to devote his whole life to the happiness of the donor.

It was only when he acknowledged the feasibility of his mother's suggestions, and the inappreciable advantages which his family would derive from the successful prosecution of his addresses to Helen, that Hunter felt the full difficulty of his situation. Vain was the hope with which he had flattered himself that he had conquered, or at least weakened, the force of his ill-fated passion for Rose Mayhew. That struggle was now to be fought afresh, and with an increased painfulness, for he loved her with a tenderer and more ineradicable affection, now that he was about to incur the risk of losing her for ever.

That his attachment was still reciprocated by Rose, notwithstanding the late avoidance of each other's society, which both seemed to have adopted from the same sense of duty and propriety, he had but too much reason for be-

Creamstances soon compelled the decision. which his own energies seemed unable to form. However, the young man to whom his sister-Harries had been betrothed, and whose parents within the consent to the marriage because her perturn had been dissipated by her brother, a served in London at this period, and instantly received the probable success that would attend his own suit, if that of Hunter were pushed to a prosperious issue. A new and delightful hope springing up in his bosom, he sought an interview with Aifred, and, frankly stating the information which he had received as to Helen's property, and the presumed state of her affections, asked him why he refused to avail himself of the glorious opportunity for redeeming the fortunes of his family, which fate was ready to throw into his hands, if he would only grasp it.

"Poor, and utterly dependent as I am at present," said Holloway, "it would be a proof I have demanded of my father and of my enployers, whether, in the event of your marryin a woman of fortune, the former would with draw his objections to my union with Harrie and the latter would receive me as a partne. In their answers they accede, as you will see to my wishes; and I appeal to yourself whether I have not some right to expect that you shoul at least make an attempt to realize all thes visions of happiness."

"Oh! you have, doubtless, a right, are abundant right," cried Hunter, walking up and down the room in a hurried and agitated manner; "and, when there is a chance of effecting so much for my dear mother, for Harriet, and for yourself, I am a wretch to suffer any considerations of my own probable misery—."

"Misery!" interposed Holloway; "how can you be rendered miserable by conferring hap-

thing saddening in the prospect of enjoying the pleasures of comparative affluence, in the society of a wife who, if I have been rightly informed, is amiable, accomplished, and attractive?"

She is; she is every thing that you have been told, and yet I had a thousand times ther —, but no, no, no! Wretched and heart-broken I may be, but I will not be a ville; I will sacrifice myself for the sake of ... Tell me, did Harriet urge you to make is application?"

"No, indeed; she has refrained, as she tells
e, from ever mentioning the subject to you,
though frequently solicited to do so by her
other, lest you should be prompted by your
otherly affection to put a violence upon your
we inclinations."

"Generous, kind-hearted girl! I half sus-Pected as much. Had she reproached me, as she was so well entitled to do, methinks I have borne it; but her meek heroism, he complaining sorrow, her undiminished af and delicate consideration—these, the irresistible. I cannot, will not, any longe the sight of her waning health, and of he efforts to conceal from me the sad prost of her spirits. Holloway! you have concell submit. I will be the martyr; you a Harriet shall be happy; but you must me a day or two to consider how I me complish your wishes with the greatest polity of success, for, in my present perture of mind, I can neither act nor think as I to do. Farewell! I will see you to-mor

So saying, he hurried out of the room w awaiting the reply of his companion, wh anxious to learn how his union with a and agreeable heiress could possibly be sidered a martyrdom, or be viewed with an inexplicable repugnance.

On the morrow a new and painful occurrence confirmed the wavering resolution of Hunter. One of his mother's creditor's, after having long foregone his claim for an old debt, put an execution in the house, and seized the few articles of value which she had saved out of the wreck of her fortunes. These relics were less appreciated for their intrinsic worth, than for the associations connected with them. One had been the gift of her husband before their marriage, another had belonged to her father, <sup>a</sup> third was a present from a deceased friend: all had been preserved, under the most pressing difficulties, with a fond tenacity, and all were endeared to her by their awakening a thousand miniscences of pleasant days now passed ay, but not, as she trusted, for ever, for she ang to the superstitious hope that they might entually return, so long as she was sur-Tounded by these cherished memorials.

There was a charm about them, that seemed

my heart-strings, when you know that you have the power of preventing it?"

The unfortunate son, surveying the scene before him with the stupor of a calm despair, without daring to look her in her face, turned his regards upon his sister, who said nothing, but whose eyes, suffused with tears, seemed, for the first time, to convey an expression of reproach.

Meek and subdued as was this silent appeal, it went to the very heart of her brother, who in vain attempted to conceal his emotions as he held out a hand to each, and exclaimed in a broken voice:—"Mother! Harriet! be comforted; you shall have no further cause to complain of me. I have already promised our sould friend Holloway that I would comply with your wishes, and Heaven grant that we may not of us be disappointed in the result! As this execution upon our goods and chattels, it shall, at all events, be removed for the pre-

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sent. Our creditor, who is a humane man, will not refuse to grant us a few days' respite, when he is apprized that a short delay may enable us to satisfy his claim. I will see him instantly, and get this unwelcome visitant, who is so unconcernedly taking an inventory of our effects, shortly expelled from our apartments."

For this purpose he hastened from the room, which he had no sooner quitted than his sister, who had partially restrained her feelings in his presence, gave a free vent to her tears, and sobbed aloud; while the mother, crying and laughing at the same moment, and totally regardless of the sheriff's-officer, who stared at her with amazement, affectionately kissed her favourite articles of furniture, congratulating them, as if they had been rational beings, on the probability that the menaced separation would now be prevented, and that they might continue together as happily as heretofore.

with so fastidious a hesitation; and as to the scruples that have hitherto deterred me, to wha do they amount? I give my hand to one woman, while my heart is in possession of-Heigho! no more, no more-for 'that way mad-1 ness lies!' Well, I put a violence upon my feelings; I stifle my unhappy passion for one whom it would be a folly, as well as a selfish cruelty, to marry; I espouse Miss Owen - I solemnly swear to love, honour, and cherish her, and I will sacredly perform my vow. Reli-i gion, gratitude, duty, will impel me to redeems: my pledge; and if I know any thing of myselt. they will never appeal to me in vain. Heedless. foolish, extravagant, I may have been; but our a principled I am not, nor ever was. And bomany men daily present themselves at the ma riage altar, subsequently to become happy devoted husbands, whose affections, at moment, were in the same predicament as " own. Love is, perhaps, more likely to be the

vive, however vigorously it may have existed before wedlock. A short indifference, leading to a durable and rational attachment, is much better than the brief honeymoon of passion, which is so often extinguished in a long and cheerless night of alienation.

"Yes, yes—mine will be the more prudent choice, and who shall henceforward charge me with recklessness or improvidence? Were it otherwise, indeed, I must submit to my fate. I have no right to enter into calculations upon the subject, as if I were a free agent. Not for myself, Heaven knows! but for others, am I about to become a happy—Ha! ha—happy! well, let that pass. Enough for me, even should I entail wretchedness upon myself, that I shall confer happiness upon my dear mother, upon Harriet, upon Holloway. Not even for them, however, can I screw up my courage to a personal interview with Miss Owen, nor do I well know how I shall shape my saucy

proposal, even with the aid of pen and paper."

With an impetuosity that seemed to distrust its own purpose if it were allowed to cool, he seized the writing materials, and instead of the "Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise, and three-piled hyperboles," which usually characterize a love letter, hastily dashed off the following.

kindness of Miss Owen to be at least equal to her talents and accomplishments, I could never summon courage to urge the proposal which I me now about to submit to her consideration—Perhaps, I should rather say, to her forgiveness.

Even with this conviction upon my mind, I hemitate to make the daring avowal which—but it is useless to delay, it is impossible any longer to suppress it. Have pity upon me, I beseech you, and believe me when I affirm, that however my present boldness may sayour of pre-

you, be your decision favourable or adverse, must unalterably be those of the profounderst respect and gratitude.

"You found me here in the menial, the degrading, situation of wharf clerk to your uncle, an occupation to which I honestly confess utter repugnance; although I have endeavoured to discharge its duties as well as a revolted and unhappy mind would allow me. Notwit hstanding this disparity in our circumstances, you favoured me with your notice, you suffered me to share your society, perhaps it is not much to add that you honoured me with you friendship. Once more forgive me if this a vain and overweening conclusion, for feelings are excited, almost to bewilderment, and I scarcely know what I write. You gav me reason, at all events, to believe that my so ciety was not altogether displeasing to you and poor as it is, this is the only excuse I can

assign, for raising my aspiring thoughts to a still higher distinction, and daring to solicit the honour of your hand in marriage.

"The word is written. I have passed the Rubicon—my fate is at your disposal. me if you will, but do not upbraid me, do not hate me, do not increase the sufferings of a heart already wrung with sorrow and remorse; and suffer me to add in extenuation of my audacity, that by birth, by education, and, I trust, by the honourable feelings which confer its best dignity upon the character, I presume to call myself a gentleman. Should you, in allowing my claim to that distinction, consider yourwarranted in granting my suit, you will have a much better security than any that I could offer by oaths and protestations for my conscientious, grateful, and lifelong devotion to your happiness.

"You have a right, however, to be satisfied upon one point. Fear not, in the event of your

rejecting me, (alas! it is but too p contingency,) that I shall embarrass y continued presence at the Wharf. mind is made up. In that case, I sha diately embark with my mother and Canada, where we have a relation promised to assist my efforts for the re of our fallen fortunes. That countiment as it is, may, perhaps, be kind than the land of my birth, and I may the peace and prosperity which in will ever, as I fear, be denied to the the disappointed, and the unhappy

## "ALFRED HO!

Helen, who was sitting at work we when she received this epistle, was and vehemently affected during its Although she had believed for some to that the affections of the writer were gether uninterested in his pointed a mitting attentions, she had neither an

so immediate a declaration, nor that it would be made in writing. The agitation of her surprised feelings, the tender delight that thrilled through her heaving bosom, and deeply suffused her features, revealed to her, for the first time, the depth and the intensity of her attachment. She drew two or three gasping inspirations, and then, laying her trembling hand upon the shoulder of her companion, exclaimed in a broken voice, "Open the window, my dear Rose. I am a little overcome, but I shall be better presently. Such a strange such an unexpected—but with you I can have no secrets, my more than sister, my best of My happiness is your's, and your's mine. And yet I should like to keep you hile in suspense, for you would never, never the contents of this letter."

Pardon me," replied Rose, endeavouring look arch and smiling, although the blood had fled from her cheeks, and even from her

iips—"The letter is from Mr. Hunter, and it contains an offer of his hand."

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"Amazing! did he then acquaint you with his intentions?"

"No, indeed; he has scarcely spoken to me for many weeks past; but I have long discovered his secret, I recognized his handwriting in the superscription, and your eloquent countenance told me all the rest. I read your features, which was quite equal to a perusal of your letter."

"Positively, my dear little Rose de Meaux, you almost make me afraid of you. It is dangerous to be in your society, for your eyes are like the spear of Ithuriel, and your acute penetration rather resembles that of a spirit, than of a creature of the earth. At this very moment I believe you are acquainted with my inmost thoughts."

"I suspect that I am, nor would your silence prevent me, for your face is a dial which, although it be voiceless, reveals what is passing within it."

That you are a sorceress I will not affirm, but I know you to be an enchantress; and as I suspect that you could divine, if you wished it, every word of this letter, my putting it into your hands is no great proof of confidence towards you, nor any violation of it towards the writer."

to pe of nonchalance little in accordance with her real feelings, she delivered the letter to her companion, and leaning over her shoulder began to read it over again, her first agitated perusal having left upon her mind only a general impression of its contents. This process she had scarcely commenced, when it was intermpted by her somewhat petulant exclamation of For Heaven's sake, Rose, do hold the papers little more steadily; your hand shakes so, that it is impossible to read a line; and

indeed you tremble all over, like an aspense

Her friend, whose lightning glance, whenever she was reading, always outstripped the '
quickest eyes of others, paid no attention to
this remark, but rapidly turned over the paper,
and had just reached the signature, when an
unbidden and unconscious tear fell upon the
extended arm of her companion.

"My sweet little Mimosa!" exclaimed the latter, tenderly embracing her, "I am gratified more than I can express, by this touching proof of your sympathy, but you must not indulge such an intensity of feeling. You are a thousand times more agitated than I am myself; one would really imagine that the letter was addressed to you, not to me."

Rose attempted to gasp a reply, but her words were choked by sobs; and her feelings now becoming utterly irrepressible, she buried her head in the bosom of her friend, and burst a short paroxysm, for she presently raised up her sylph-like form, and making an effort to conquer her emotion, though the dark fringes of her downcast eyes were still bedewed with tears, she said in a low, tremulous voice—

Forgive me, dear Helen; I have always been foolishly sensitive, as you well know; and since this tedious illness I am subject to a morbid nervousness which, at times, completely overcomes me. You were kind enough to say just now, that my happiness was your's, and most truly can I affirm that your's is mine. It was this thought, and the prospect of the certain felicity opening upon you from your union with—in short, my feelings got the better of me; but I am calm now, quite collected, and can thank you for your confidence in showing me this letter, which has made me very very—happy."

The last lingering word was scarcely audible.

and the poor girl was fain to affect a cough sin order to conceal her returning emotion.

"My sweet little trembler!" cried here friend, pressing her affectionately to her bosom.

"you must really, I repeat, check this acute sensibility—or it will shake to pieces your fragile and attenuated frame."

"If I thought so, I would rather encourage than repress it," sighed Rose.

"Nay, nay, you shall not give way to melancholy on so pleasant an occasion as my receiving an offer of marriage. I will not ask you what you think of his letter, for you can scarcely have read it in the moment that your eyes flitted over the lines."

"I could repeat every word of it."

"You are a wonderful and gifted creature, but, as I possess no such intuitive and supernatural insight, and still less so retentive a memory, you must allow me a second perusal of this impertinent epistle."

So saying, she took it from the hand of her friend, and after having read it deliberately over, suddenly exclaimed, "This a love-letter! why, there is no such word as 'love' in the whole composition. It seems to have been drawn up by a lawyer — formal as an apprentice's indenture, and cold as a magistrate's mittimus. Cupid's flames have no effect upon my uninflammable suitor: he remains as cool as a cucumber. Here are respect, and gratitude, and friendship, and conscientious discharge of his duty, and so forth, but not the smallest mention of admiration and attachment, not a single passing compliment—Heaven save the mark!-to my irresistible attractions, not a solitary phrase that savours of a lover's ardour and devotion. 'Was ever woman in such fashion woo'd? was ever woman in such fashion won 9 . ..

<sup>&</sup>quot;He tells you that his feelings are excited

almost to bewilderment—that he scarcely knows what he writes."

"Love, at all events, does not seem to be responsible for his emotion, for there is not an atom of passion in this hasty scrawl. It contains a proposal of marriage, indeed, but for aught that appears to the contrary, the writer might be in love with another woman."

"Do you think so?" sighed Rose, while her heart palpitated vehemently, and the returning blood suddenly reddened her face and forehead. "Surely, surely, the offer of his hand sufficiently shows the real state of his affections."

"It might, dear Rose, if men never gave the hand without the heart; but is it not just possible that this unimpassioned suitor, like Marmontel's *Philosophe Soi-disant*, may be simply smitten by the sparkling eyes of my money-box?"

"Mr. Hunter is incapable of any thing

sordid and ungenerous; that he should be base or unprincipled is impossible, quite impossible. I believe him to possess every good quality that can render him worthy to be the husband, even of my noble-minded Helen, and I know not how I could pronounce a higher eulogy."

"Heyday! what a zealous and animated advocate have you suddenly become! Would you then seriously and deliberately recommend me to marry the creature?"

"I would, I would; and if you act upon my most strenuous advice, I can almost stake my existence that you will never, never, have reason to repent your choice."

"Have you forgotten all the faults and bad qualities that we have observed in him ourselves, or have heard imputed to him by others? Let me recapitulate them. Imprudence—extravagance—speculation—gambling—irritability—capriciousness—pride—inattention to business; to which goodly list we must add,

on the authority of Mrs. Skinner, irreligion, a proneness to low company and to deep potations."

"As he has triumphantly refuted the first that woman's vile calumnies, I totally de lisbelieve the others; and as to the little indi = 1iscretions that we ourselves have remarked, to what do they amount? Who is perfect—what man is faultless, which of us is impeccable? O Helen, Helen, do not trifle on a subject 89 solemn and important as this. Do not, free-m fastidiousness or caprice, throw away thechan the certainty, of a happiness which the first woman in the land might justly envy you. To Mr. Hunter's failings I am by no means blind. He wants the strength of mind that should reconcile him to the fallen fortunes, not of him self, but of his mother and his sister, whose reverses he feels himself to have been the unintentional author. But by how many noble and exalted qualities are his infirmities

ed! Religious, in the highest sense of rd; gentle, generous, and affectionate, sesses, in an eminent degree, every plishment calculated to bless and adorn ic life."

avo!" cried Helen. "Take breath, and know when you have come to the end of anegyric."

nd the pride to which you have objected,"
need Rose, "what is it but the natural
of poverty and disappointment, acting
high spirit conscious of its own digwhat is it but the excusable jealousy of
leman, only the more anxious to uphold
sonal, because he has lost his pecuniary,
ndence. The sense of his birthright is
ually struggling with his sense of the
s of fortune; and he wants, as I have
y admitted, the fortitude and resignation
hould enable him to maintain this painful
t. But Helen, dearest Helen! you will

wif away, in order to prevent Mr. Hunter from doing the same? Lud, child! would you hurry me into a marriage of compassion with a poor, proud, decayed gentleman, without once inquiring the state of my affections?"

"That I had already ascertained. Ah, Helen! you cannot deceive me; I have long since penetrated into your heart and discovered its secret. In spite of Mr. Hunter's little imperfections, you think of him favourably, highly, fondly, and that conscious blush betrays that I have read you right."

Ridiculous! you are quick-sighted, I confess; but you must not mistake fancy for intuition, and indulge in such groundless reveries about my affections. If I have any leaving safely say with Beatrice that I love him more than reason; and as to my leaving him to perish, you forget how my haughty gentleman has provided beforehand against my

rejection of his suit, by telling me that he has secured an asylum in Canada."

"An Elysium in the wilderness—a Paradise in the desert. Have you the heart, Helen, to condemn a highly cultivated and intellectual mind like his, formed to be the ornament of polished society, to a life of solitude and degrading drudgery, amid the snows and forests of North America? Would you expose his aged mother, and our poor, delicate, sinking Harriet, to the miseries of exile and the rigours of an inhospitable climate?"

Protesting her anxiety to save them from this fate, Helen contended that their expatrition was by no means an inevitable alternation as Hunter, if he possessed the various tales for which his eulogist gave him credit, oug to be well able to maintain his family in bown country. With the true selfishness an cunning of love she then proceeded to urgother, and even imaginary, objections against

him, for the mere pleasure of hearing them refuted by Rose, who pleaded his cause with a continued enthusiasm of which the effects were manifest in her glowing cheeks, her sparkling eyes, and the animation of her countenance. The result of this controversy, which prolonged till the evening, was a tardy confession, on the part of Helen, that she should be disposed to think favourably of Hunter's wit, provided he could clear up certain imputations upon his character, which had not hitherto been satisfactorily disproved to her own mind, however they might be discredited by Rose. For this purpose she resolved to grant him an interview, and to demand full ex-Planations upon every point that still remained subject to the smallest doubt.

Scarcely had the friends arrived at this conclusion, when the door was suddenly opened, and Mrs. Skinner hurried into the room, her eyes gleaming with a malignant exultation, as

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she exclaimed, "Well, Miss Owen, well, Miss Mayhew; I am so glad I found you at hor. You would not believe me when I told y of Mr. Hunter's profligate goings-on. Y said they were gross and scandalous izzaventions. Not that the stories originated with me, for if there is one thing upon earth that abominate more than another, it is tattling and detraction. 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer,' saith the holy Scripture, and Heaven knows I am the last person to disobey the divine precept. I never listen to the goesiP of my backbiting neighbours, whom I acknowledge to be a very bad set; but one cannot shut one's eyes, and seeing, you know, Miss Over, is believing, Miss Owen. I told you what I had heard from others - that Mr. Hunta a confirmed tippler. Well, I met him just 20 W in Tooley Street; and, perceiving by his look, his manner, and his walk, that he had bees in dulging too freely in the bottle. I tured

when he got into an instant quarrel with his benefactor, good Mr. Bryant, loaded him with abuse, and is at this moment tossing the books about the place in a state of filthy intoxication."

"Impossible!" was the simultaneous exclalation of both her auditors.

"Ay, I thought you would say so, that is always the way. Hark! methinks I hear him brawling on the Wharf, and you will, perhaps, trust the evidence of your own eyes. Ha! there he is. What say you now?"

At these words, Helen and Rose looked out of the open window. The setting sun, as if to make atonement for the rarity of its visits, whome with an unusual brilliancy over the Wharf, towards the centre of which they beheld Hunter, seated upon a tall hogshead, and brandishing a long counting-house ruler, with all the ridiculous gesticulations of ebriety.

His hat was off, his profuse locks were disordered, and the bright rays of the sun imparted an additional redness to his flushed features. An air of happy triumph animated his countenance, and his voice, though elevated was neither harsh nor menacing as he exclaimed—

"Once more, Jacob Bryant, I warn thee as thy peril not to approach me, for no longer will I be thy bondsman, thy galley-slave. Log will I no longer carry for thee, but I will espouse the fair Miranda, and become the monarch of an enchanted island. Behold I as a king already; I am seated on my throne; the is my royal sceptre; and as for my golden crown, I will wreathe my brows with a subeam, until my locks become glorious as the worthy art thou to be primate of the Fig. worthy art thou to be primate of the Fig.

<sup>my</sup> magic wand, lest I metamorphose thee into <sup>a</sup> Nereid, like Glaucus, or whisk thee down the river, riding, like Arion, on a dolphin's back."

The only answer to this effusion was a horselaugh from his fellow clerk, who stood holding his sides at the counting-house door, and could not restrain his risible propensities at the thought of the grave and corpulent Mr. Bryant bestriding a fish, instead of his sturdy brown cob, Factotum.

"I smell pitch," resumed Hunter with a look of ineffable disdain. "Hemp and flax, tar, turpentine, and tallow, are an abomination to my nostrils. Into the river let them forthwith be tossed, together with their containing casks and carboys. Faugh! an ounce of civet, good Mr. Apothecary, to sweeten my imagination."

An exclamation from Mrs. Skinner occasioned him for the first time to look up at the window; but, instead of being daunted into silence by the sight of Helen and Rose, who stood gazing at him in a transfixed amazement, he leaped to the ground, fell upon one knee, extended both his arms, and cried out in an impassioned tone—

" 'But soft! what light through yonder window breaks! It is the East, and Juliet is the sun! It is my lady! Oh! it is my love.

Oh! that she knew she were!

O speak to me, bright angel! for thou art

Glorious as is a messenger of Heaven,

Unto the white upturned wondering eyes

Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,

When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,

And sails upon the bosom of the air.'

"Thou peerless paragon! thou for whom I have so long sighed in secret! thou who wilt for ever sit enthroned in my heart, why should I not proclaim my love for thee? What are fate, fortune, poverty, or death? Give me but thee, and I defy them all!"

Helen, who, after the letter of the morning,

heaving with agitation as she hurried to her own room, murmuring, "Shameful! shameful!

Any thing else I could have forgiven; but public brawling, daylight intoxication! such open disgrace! I have done with him—I abandon him to his fate—I discard him utterly and for ever!"

Still more agonizing were the feelings of Rose. Her keener and infallible perceptions had detected that Hunter's eyes had been all along intently riveted upon her's, leaving it impossible for her to doubt that he had been apostrophizing herself and not her friend. In the evident confusion of his mind, he might, indeed, have mistaken the object of his adoration; but it was much more probable that intoxication, a proverbial divulger of truth, had betrayed the secret of his heart; and that,

although he was paying his addresses to Helen, he was in reality enamoured of herself. The conflict of feeling occasioned by this suspicion being more than her debilitated frame could support, she cank upon the sofa in a state of insensibility; while Mrs. Skinner, regretting her inability to afford her any succour, as she was engaged to attend a missionary meeting, quitted the room, and despatched a maid servant to her assistance.

## CHAPTER X.

"Sit, worthy friends. My lord is often thus, And hath been from his youth; pray you keep seat; The fit is momentary; on a thought He will be well again."

SHAKSPRARE.

WHEN we quitted Cypress House and the Lomax family, the latter were enjoying a comparative peacefulness to which they had long been strangers. Happy in the devoted homage of a lover, whose good qualities developed themselves the more copiously as their intimacy increased, Mary, fully reciprocating his attachment, gave free vent to a temperament which was not the less ardent and affectionate, because it was veiled beneath an exterior of habitual sedateness. Her present enjoyment of exist-

ence, enhanced by its novelty, as we'her delight at the unusual calmness a mony of her parents, imparted, for the n a rare expression of cheerfulness to tures, and animated her whole deportment a character of exhilaration, which was so and increased by the frequent visits, as gratulations, and vivacious sallies, of he friend, Helen Owen.

Lomax, whose more cheerful, or ratidesponding mood, was manifested in creased hospitality, took refuge from in often-repeated dinner parties. From banquets, in which the host justly van variety of his rare wines, Jasper Piseldom absent.

Though disappointed at not having of the hand, or rather the fortune, of Miss that feast-smelling worthy saw no reaso ever for abandoning a mansion whice forth the temptation of such freque herar Iy indulged his gastronomic propensities at his own cost, and, therefore, set a double value upon gratuitous treats; while other, though not less selfish, motives attracted him to Cypress House. A proficient in almost every game upon the cards, which he had cultivated, not as an amusement, but as a means of profit, he contrived to draw from that source a small, but certain revenue, as he invariably retired from the contest when he found himself pitted against a more skilful adversary, or encountering a run of ill luck.

omax, inexpert and yet persevering, betake he delighted in any excitement that drew
him from his own thoughts, would play piquet
with his guest during the greater part of the
his bt, generally losing, and never seeming to
regret his ill-fortune. With an apparent, and
yet intelligible inconsistency, he at once loved
and despised the wealth which he had so

fraudulently obtained, cherishing it as the means of supplying his luxuries, and of procuring him a certain ostensible respect, while he viewed it with disdain since he had discovered its utter insufficiency to secure him safety, health, the real friendship of others, or his own peace of mind.

Among the guests invited to one of these costly dinners, was Captain Bryant, the heir-apparent of Eagle Wharf, and the commander of the Charming Kitty, which vessel had just arrived in the river from a long voyage. The vulgarity that he inherited from both his parents, being in some degree warranted by the rough manners and free and easy deportment for which the sailor claims a professional license, there was something rather pleasing a than offensive in his frank and natural demeanour, unpolished as it was.

Perfectly at home when introduced to a nu-merous assemblage at Cypress House, many and

whom he had never seen before, he saluted the strangers with a good-humoured nod, while his acquaintance had to endure the ordeal of iron hand, which, in the severity of its dness, rather crushed than clasped the finfers it imprisoned:—" Glad to see ye, glad to ee ye," was his bluff exclamation to the former, "though I never clapped eyes on ye before. We shall wet our whistles together for the first time to-day, but I dare say it won't be the last, for, once a messmate, is always a messmate with Ambrose Bryant, if we have only tossed off a single bowl of grog together. Beg pardon, ladies! I suppose I ought to talk of nothing but French wines and foreign kickshaws in such a grand room as this. Why, old Cypress House is so transmogrified that I scarcely know it again. Mercy on us! what rare curtains and cornices! crimson studding sails with gilt booms; and, as for looking-glasses, a fellow may see himself in

half a dozen different directions at once, and yet only clap eyes on a single Tom Fool after all. Ask pardon, comrades, I am only speaking for one Ambrose Bryant."

"The furnishing of this drawing-room," said Lomax with an air of pomposity, "cost me some hundreds of pounds, and, therefore, it ought to be handsome. All the materials are of the very best quality; I desired particularly that no cost should be spared; do you admire the taste of the embellishments?"

"No; they are too much like the gilt gingerbread shops at Bartlemy fair. But, I am no judge of these matters, and, besides, I have no taste for any thing just now except for dinner. It smells so savoury that my fingers itch to be at it with the knife and fork. Are we waiting for any body?"

"I believe we are all assembled, with the exception of Mr. Pike."

"What! is Pike coming? Umbrella Pike,

the old beau, as I used to call him, the chap
that was always tumbling into scrapes from his
over-anxiety to keep out of them? Psha!
never wait for him, man! Do n't spoil a good
dinner for such a good-for-nothing prig as
that.

the lady of the house, and it would look so rude to sit down to dinner without him."

people waiting, only to choke them after all with victuals boiled and roasted to rags. Beg pard on, Mrs. Lomax; I am sure I need n't ask it from any of our sharp-set messmates, here, but with your permission, I'll ring the bell, that you may order those jack-a-dandy fellows with the long bobs at their shoulders to dish up. Lay all the fault upon me—I know the value of master Jasper Pike."

Of this the speaker gave a practical illustration by snapping his fingers with a most

expressive look of contempt, while the maj of the party corroborated his opinion by rious disparaging reflections on the selfishraess, cowardice, finical smartness, and affected juvenility, of the expected visiter.

"Whatever we subtract from Mr. Pile's good qualities," said Mary, "we ought to the talent which enables him, with so personal recommendations, to become so quent a guest, both here and at Eagle Whately

"Confound the fellow!" cried the capta"
"he would spell for a dinner, even if he didn
know his alphabet. Besides, he once recommended to my father a speculation in hemp, b
which he made a few hundred pounds, and
always comes provided with some new suggestion of the sort, when he wants to have a cut
at our mutton, taking good care to call when it
is nearly roasted."

"I have a shrewd suspicion," resumed Mary, "that we all of us like to have a sort of

oat among our acquaintance; one who bad enough to disgrace us, and yet suffiunamiable to flatter our self-love, by g us to say to ourselves, and to one r, 'I thank Heaven that I am not like blican.'"

n't tell what others may feel," replied or, "but, for my own part, I should n't any great compliment to myself to say was n't any such a niggardly, selfish, tical chap as old Pike."

l! he is not old," observed Lomax, a which was echoed by the senior Bar;, both being themselves somewhat adin years, began to speak of middleen as youngsters. "Nor is he by any
without his good qualities," continued
mer; "he plays an excellent hand at

d he is a capital judge of port-wine,"

ld Barlow, who piqued himself upon

the skill with which he had stocked his capacious cellars.

"Ay, ay, I can understand all that," said Bryant; "he always puffs the wine, that he may have an excuse for drinking more of it, and be asked a second time to dinner. There are many red-nosed old chaps, my father for one, who had much rather that you should praise their port than themselves."

"Allow me to inform you, Captain Bryant," said the elder Barlow, with a grave look, "that a man may have a red-nose without being in the smallest degree intemperate."

"To be sure he may, for I know you hold two or three bottles a day to be no intemperance. Come, come, neighbour, don't look glum. I owe you a good turn for the way in which you coppered and repaired the Charming Kitty. A better sea-boat never left the Thames."

"She will surely require docking, again, after so long a voyage," observed the ship

builder, who never lost sight of the main chance.

"Why, ay, after getting ashore at Rio, she will want a little overhauling, and I shall warp her down to your dock as soon as I get her cargo out."

"My good fellow," cried Barlow, holding out his hand, though not without an anticipatory wince, "how could you imagine that I looked glum at you? Such an old friend, too, as honest Ambrose Bryant! The lower dock, which is now empty, will do for her famously, and we had better have her in before she is visited by the inspectors of Lloyd's, or the may lose her class in the register-books."

The aunouncement of dinner put an end to this conversation; and the guests being maraballed two and two, proceeded to the dining-room, taking precedence according to their presumed wealth, the citizens' patent of nobility. With the exception of Evelyn and Mary, for

Benjamin was not well enough to the whole assemblage were avo good cheer, so that, after having of admiration at the splendid at the table, they betook themselve the serious discussion of the feas them.

Hushed was the human voice in a few exclamatory eulogia up and viands, while the clattering forks, and the smacking of lips alacrity with which every combat his part in the general demoliti. Already had the fish and soup and an attack was about to com substantial joints, when the doo open, and Pike swung into the roon his toes with his usual jau perking up his chin as he exclain thousand apologies, Mrs. Loma: all! Ever your devoted slave.

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gentlemen, I have the honour to salute the say in France. Ha! a chair left me. I see: better late than never. I am you sate down without me; we single fellows should never be waited for."

Young!" cried Captain Bryant. "Ha! why, you were a single young fellow when farst went to school."

In general, you are remarkably punctual,"

id Mrs. Lomax. "I have never yet known
to be wanting after the dinner-hour had

truck."

I have," said the captain; "once when saged to a public dinner where he was to ave paid his quota, upon which occasion he ever showed up at all."

Nay, now, I protest — I appeal — this is a sir, when it is notorious that upon the day question I was very seriously indisposed."

\*\*Ay, very seriously indisposed to come down
\*\*ith the cash: I believe you there. Ha! ha!"

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"I cannot reply to you now; we do not start fair, for I have all the lost ground of my fish and soup to recover. Let me come up with you, and then I shall be ready for a sparring-match with you or any body. Capital dinner — a prime spread, upon my honour! I shall soon overtake you, captain, for I believe few fellows possess a better set of grinders. He, he, he!"

Having renewed his laugh, merely for the purpose of displaying his teeth, of which he was not a little vain, he plied his knife and fork with such diligence, that he quickly placed himself upon a par with the other guests, when he whispered to his right-hand neighbour:—" Not sorry, after all, to be a little late, for these good people are terribly apt to give me the carving-place, which I abominate. True, the carver may save the best slice for himself, but it is sure to be cold before he can snatch time to eat it. Ever while you live, sit next to

The carver, if you can, for there you may interept the tit bits, and demolish them without Interruption."

Acting upon this prudent principle, he had soon satisfied the cravings of his hunger, when, reply to the inquiries of Lomax, he explained be cause of his impunctuality: — "Why, you ee, my good friend, it was too dirty to walk, and coach-hire from the Temple to Bermondsey no joke, so, as I knew that my friend Sam Vard was going to Greenwich to dinner, and lates driving alone, I kindly offered to fill the acant place in his gig for a part of the way."

"Or, in other words, you sponged upon him For a cast," said the captain.

"But, when it came to the door," pursued Pike, "I did not at all like the look of his new horse, a tall, rampant, pawing creature, who threw back his ears, which I consider a very bad sign, and glared at me askance, as if he

ched off triumphantly. In the eagerness our dispute, however, I quite forgot my sat coat, which I never recollected until was some distance from the river, and, when ran back to the stairs, the boatman had dispeared, and I was saluted by a shout of aghter from his vulgar comrades."

"In which I beg leave to join," roared the ptain, with a horse-laugh.

With the wine, which seldom fails to promote reality, the conversation took a more general rn; and Pike, whose calculating cowardice and Pike, whose calculating cowardice and him afraid of exciting the smallest unendly feeling, even in the most unimportant lividual, sought every opportunity of conciling the captain by fulsome compliments to personal valour, the nautical profession, and beauty of the Charming Kitty. Upon the former subjects no reply was vouchsafed, cept an occasional, and not very courteous, clamation of "Fudge!" or "Humbug!" but vol. 11.

orse, or getting into a stage-coach, or sitting quietly at home. A ship may go down, and a horse may come down, but neither happens very often, so we are equal upon that score."

"But will you not admit that you are a sort of prisoners?" asked Mary.

"Ay! as a bird is in the air, or a fish in the ocean. Landsmen are prisoners, if you like, for half of them spend their whole lives in the same village or town, and almost all in the same country; but a sailor, who has at tether, no bounds or barriers to restrain him, who is as free and unshackled as the wind that fills his sail, wanders east, west, north, wherever his fancy or his duty may lead him; sees every nation under the sun, there not a rope's end for any, and makes himbelf at home in all. I tell you what—you may wilk of kings and emperors, but I question whether e'er a one of those crowned big wigs

upon his throne feels half so much like a monarch as I do, when I tread the deck of the Charming Kitty, as she spanks over the foaming waters at ten or twelve knots an hour, an nothing to be seen on any side but sea and sky as if she were the only live thing in the world -I should like to know what company is equal to a lonesomeness like this, where I am king of my own crew, and not only master of my own ship, but of the watery world that surrounds me. Why, I feel that I am then indeed a lord of the creation, and could almost fancy myself a demigod, if any such cattle were living in our days. Besides, lookee here-there's not only the grandeur of solitude in such a situation, but, to a certain extent, the pleasure of society, for know that there 's a busy and a pleasant world of fellow-creatures all around me, though ! can't clap eyes on 'em; I know that there are lots of friendly hearts and pretty below the horizon, and I have only got to

hoose, where I may shake the hands of the immer, smack the lips of the latter, and empty cheerful bowl with both—and so pass up the bottle, messmate, for talking makes a fellow dry, and I haven't spun such a long yarn since I made a speech to the underwriters, when they gave me a piece of plate for beating off a French privateer."

"You have compared yourself to a king," resumed Mary, "and you certainly pay one of the unenviable penalties of royalty, in not having any one with whom you can associate on terms of equality. Like Selkirk, in his uninhabited island, you are 'monarch of all you survey;' but the lonesomeness that gives you supremacy must deprive it of its charms, for discipline, I presume, will not allow you to make companions of your crew. Surely a few pleasant passengers would be an agreeable relief to your regal solitude?"

"Why, ay, there's some sense in that remark," replied the sailor; "first, because there's better freight than passage-money, and second because a little live lumber of the gentry kins does certainly save one, now and then, from falling asleep, or having the doldrums during a long calm. In that respect, I was unlucky for I was to have brought home a friend of my own, only he was taken ill just as I was on the point of sailing. I hope he is hearty again by this time, for I don't know a pleasanter fellow than honest Ned Ruddock."

At the mention of this ominous word the uplifted wine glass fell with a smash from the hand of Lomax, who suddenly started upon his feet, and with a look and voice of agonized terror shouted out, "Who? who? what name did you mention?"

"Why, that of my friend, Edward Ruddeels.

Do you know him? He is coming to England on a very particular business, and I date as

we shall have him in the river by the next ship."

The muscles of Lomax's face and body, which had previously been in a state of violent tension, became rapidly relaxed, a cold perpiration burst from his forehead, his teeth chattered in his head, and he sank with a tremulous spasm into his chair, inarticulately numbling the word, "Lost! lost! Dest!" Presently recovering himself, however, he sprang, as if by a convulsive effort, from his chair, and tottered out of the room, opening and clutching his fingers as he ejaculated, in a hoarse whisper, "Ha! the key! the key! the garden gate! the garden gate!"

Amazement and consternation were depicted upon the countenances of the visitors, several of whom rose from their chairs; when Mrs. Lomax, whose usual presence of mind did not fail her, exclaimed with a pursuasive and courteous smile, "Let me entreat you to be com-

posed, and to resume your seats. My poor husband is subject to these attacks."

"But why should the mention of Ned Ruddock set him off into such a strange tantrum?" asked the captain.

"He was riding with a deceased friend of that name some years ago, when he was thrown from his horse, a concussion of the brain ensued, and the smallest allusion to that terrible accident invariably brings on one of these distressing fits. Excuse me, my friends, and prythee make yourselves at home during my absence. I will return to you as soon as I have administered to my poor patient one of his usual composing-draughts. Mary will do the honours of the table until I re-appear."

With these words she bowed smilingly her guests, and quitted the room, casting significant look at her daughter, as if to war her that it was necessary to retain all her self-possession in this most critical emergency. Firms

ally was, the poor girl found herself equal to the duty imposed upon her. as she deeply affected by her father's nd inexplicable seizure, but the tale invented by her mother filled her liating thoughts, and confirmed her icions that there must be some dark nected with her parents, of which tually dreaded the discovery.

herefore, her lover whispered in her ver heard of your father's terrible

Mary, alike incapable of falsehood cation, could make no other reply. rsting into tears.

earest Mary!" cried Evelyn, "you you are overcome — you had better immediately—let me support you to

in silence to the company, for she trust herself to make an apology, she room; the rest of the ladies shortly followed her example; when Pike, voting himself into the chair, observed that they were bound in common charity to drink a bumper toast to the speedy recovery of their worthy host, whose indisposition none could regret more sincerely than himself. There might besome truth in this, for he had calculated or outstaying the others, and winning eight o ten guineas from him at piquet. As it not now necessary to keep himself cool and collected for this purpose, he tossed off bumper after bumper, until the bottles were all emptied, and then intruding himself into the chariot of one of the retiring families, with the remarks that he scarcely took up any room whateres; and could squeeze himself into any corner, took possession of the best seat, laughing his sleeve at the thought of getting a case as far as Temple Bar, without the cost of single sixpence.

Quickly dissipated was the bland smile

had mantled over the features of Mrs. Lomax, on her quitting the dinner-table, and a look of stern wrath succeeded to it as she hastened to his bed-room in search of her husband. He was not there, but, on recollecting his broken exclamations, which afforded her a clue to his probable movements, she dended the stairs, and, passing into the stairs, hurried, by the light of the moon, to-

At the sound of her approaching footsteps, the terror-stricken fugitive, who had sought make his escape in that direction, sunk wering to the ground, without daring to the eyes, hoarsely whispering, "I surder—I could not get out—I have lost the key!"

Lost your wits, you mean," exclaimed the seek, with a look of unutterable scorn and indistriction. "Pitiful, self-betraying wretch!" ould that I could crush you with my foot

when you thus lie prostrate, and coil your relf

"Jane!" ejaculated Lomax, somewhat reassured by the voice of his wife, "is it years you alone—quite, quite alone?—National Constable—no Bow-street officer?"

"Chicken-hearted fool! raise up your eye and see, unless you are struck blind as we as mad. Idiot that I was, to league myse with so perilous an accomplice as a snive ling coward, whose imbecility—baugh!——I sicken to think of your loathsome and abject up, thou unmanly creature, and hie thee bed, lest thou shouldst further shame and expose thyself and me. Up, I say!"

"Nay, now, dear Jane!" murmured partner of her guilt, as he raised hims slowly upon his legs with the assistance of gate, "do not upbraid me—the deed was you suggestion — not mine. It was you who and, besides, I have not your courage, an

all have. There is something terrible lefiance of danger — no, no spirit of could display a more determined It amazes me; I cannot understand

use you feel and think like a woman, e a man. Still trembling, still shrinkalarm when a leaf rustles in the wind!
I dastard! lean upon me; we must
nger missed from the house. Hush!
It a word; keep your tongue quiet
hose rattling teeth; you have suffiendangered yourself, me, and our
for one night. Come on!"

lock is coming home," groaned Lomax, conscious of what he was uttering—he who will expose us. The Lord rey upon me! I shall die upon a

Heaven!" exclaimed his wife, firmly his arm with both her hands, "I

will myself inform against you, and deliver y

over instantly to the officers of justice, if y

speak another word on this forbidden su

ject."

"Have pity on me, dear Jane; I scarce know what I say or do. Lend me your arm and I will try to reach the house."

He made the attempt accordingly, and the were proceeding, slowly and in silence, whe the shadow of a waving tree was wafted to wards them, along the gravel walk, and Lomasstarting in an agony of terror, inarticulately muttered, "Ha! it is he—it is he! I saw that tall thin man in the low—"

"Wretch!" interposed his companion, stopping his mouth with her hand, "remember my threat—I will not be trifled with;—be silent, or by Heaven, you are a dead man! If you must needs be more frightened at shadows than I should be at realities, shut your coward eyes, and suffer me to lead you back."

Quailed by the stern energies of his accomplice, Lomax obeyed in silence, and tottered wards until they passed beneath the deep abade of the great cypress tree, at the back of house. As they emerged from it into the light of a cloudless moon, their figures presented a singular contrast, not only to the other, but to the scene that surrounded them.

Ever fortified and braced up to resistance by conviction of danger, the wife advanced with firm step, an erect attitude, and a countemance that seemed to defy not only all earthly dangers, but the very light of heaven that irradiated her fixed, resolute, and marble-like features.

Dauntless, but not rash or desperate, she glanced calmly and vigilantly around her, anxious to reach the house without exciting any avoidable observation or suspicion. Her rich dress, and the flashing of the jewels

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n her hair, for she had rushed out without shering her unite, gave her the semblance of a magic herrite, renscious that she was surrumined with perils of all sorts, and yet fully prepared to received the worst extremity of face or fortune.

To the arm of this impersonation of fortimate, or rather of impenitent audacity, clung ner still similaring husband, cowering down with a hang-log look, till he was almost half housile, involuntarily opening and clutching his ingres, his eyes firmly closed, a cold perspiration on his brow, his thoughts scared and hewildered and his heart sinking within him, even at the chattering of his own teeth, and the creaking of his shoes as he crept furtively along upon his tiptoes.

Opposite as were these effects of a joint crime upon a powerful and an imbecile mind, they were still more at variance with the restures of nature as displayed within the narrow precincts of the enclosure through which the guilty pair were passing. There all was peace and tranquillity: the stars were quietly twinkling in the serene heavens; the moon looked placidly down upon the circular grass-plot, spangling the dew, and silvering the everseens that embowered it; while the low, indistinct sounds, wafted at intervals from the distant haunts of men, gave additional intensity to the succeeding silence that brooded over the clusion of the garden, to which the dark aracter of peaceful solemnity.

By threading the plantation that adjoined house, Mrs. Lomax reached a side door observed, passed up the back stairs, and her way to her own room, still support-her husband, who threw himself upon the with a deep groan, and instantly drew the other over him as if he would hide himself from every eye.

In this position she left him; and, cautiously locking the door behind her as she quitted the apartment, returned to the dining-room, where a few of the guests, whose carriages had not yet arrived, were still remaining. Apologising, with a courteous smile and an air of perfect composure, for the disturbance that had been so unexpectedly occasioned, she declared that she had left the invalid much better, again adverted to the unfortunate accident which had subjected him to these distressing attacks, and then, turning the conversation to indifferent subjects, continued chatting, unconcernedly, with her friends, until they had all taken their departure.

Although she had thus adroitly hushed the suspicions, and counteracted the mischief, which this untoward occurrence at first threatened to produce, she could not restore to the mind of her husband the comparative tranquillity in which his senses had been lately steeped.

submitted, in the conviction of his wife's superior courage and talent, now lost its influence;
the return of Ruddock, and all the frightful
consequences to which it might lead, haunted
him both by day and by night, filling him with
such profound horror, that his faculties threatened to give way; his somnambulism returned;
he saw spectral gibbets and phantasmal hangmen, and raved incessantly about instant flight
to America, or some still more remote quarter
of the earth.

In vain did his confederate argue that they had no reason whatever for supposing that Ruddock doubted or meant to dispute the will, even if he returned to England, which was by no means certain, since he had been left seriously indisposed in a climate notoriously fatal to European constitutions, and might, not improbably, deliver them finally from all their apprehensions by his death. In vain did she

implore her husband, by his duty and affect tion as a father, to struggle with the grow IED; madness of his terror, and to defer all though ts of ignominious flight, which was of itself equivalent to a confession of guilt, at least until they should have accomplished the marriage of their daughter, whose settlement in life, if there were the smallest foundation for his fears, it was now ten thousand times more than ere incumbent upon him to secure. His natural selfishness, rendered paramount and intense by a blind dismay, incapacitated him alike from reasoning, or from being in the smallest degree affected by any other feeling than absorbing consideration of his own flig his own safety, and the transmission abro of his unjustly acquired wealth, for the future gratification of his own sensuality.

With this view he stole out in the evening for he was afraid to trust himself in the street or to face his fellow-creatures during the day

med made inquiries at the water-side respecting me vessels that would soonest sail for America, while be summoned his broker to Cypress House, that he might consult him about contenting his funded property into gold, or American stock.

Too vigilant not to have quickly discovered these proceedings, and cherishing a latent suspicion that her mean-spirited partner might attempt to abscond with whatever property he could collect, and leave his whole family in the lurch, Mrs. Lomax found herself in a dilemma of the most painful and harassing description.

Any thing that was likely to interfere with Mary's pending and most desirable marriage was above all things to be avoided, while she felt scarcely less solicitous to prevent any sudden change, either in their mode of life or place of residence, which, by disturbing the keen sensibility, might aggravate the illness of her

darling Benjamin, whose rapidly increasing debility now began, for the first time, to fill her with apprehension and anguish.

With such powerful motives for wishing to control her husband, and detach him from his perilous designs, it is difficult to describe her vexation, when she discovered that he had thrown off the yoke of her authority, and become totally unmanageable. A mightier terror had now swallowed up his fear of his wife; Ruddock, the dreaded Ruddock was the present master of his fate and actions; and he presented his covert plans for quitting the country with a craft which it was difficult to detect, and a dogged stubbornness which, when his purpose was discovered, it was impossible to subdue.

How to manage so intractable a subject, how to frustrate his secret machinations, or the danger of his life-involving indiscretions, how, in short, to avert the ruin that seemed to be imrading over the prospects of Mary, and the Osperity of the whole family, awakened the Ost intense anxiety in the mind of Mrs. Lomax. In a difficulty of this nature, courage, which he possessed even to desperation, was not of be smallest avail. Not less fertile, however, contriving expedients, than dauntless in exeiting them, she quickly devised a plan which tricated her for the moment from the perils ith which she was environed. We have rerded that Lomax, urged by the advice, and sisted by the vigilance of his wife, had latterly en practising a rare temperance in his pota-Under the pretext that his health now quired a relaxation of this restraint, she inalged him in his favourite wines, drugging his ening posset with an opiate which usually anged him into a heavy sleep for the reainder of the night. Delighted at this rerrence to his favourite habits, and still more at the mental lethargy that made him insensible to the daily terrors and spectral dreams to by which he had been haunted, the wretched man consented to be confined to his own room, dosing and drinking away his time in a sottish unconsciousness of its lapse.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Lomax, who gave out that the invalid was affected with a trifling nervous indisposition, for which quietude and a temporary seclusion had been prescribed, exhibited so calm a demeanour, and alluded to her husband's inopportune seizure with such an apparent unconcern, that any vague suspicions which it might have been calculated to excite were effectually lulled.

Successful as she had been in thus hood-winking her friends, she did not less feel the importance of accelerating a marriage with which so many critical and unforeseen caselties might interfere. The father of the love, a keen, penetrating man of business, might make inquiries of which it was impossible

ipate the result; Lomax, bursting from minement in a fit of terror or intoxication, t ruin all by some fearful revelation; Rudmight, in very truth, return to claim his sed property; or the will might be chald, and a suit instituted in his behalf, a mstance of which it would be impossible ppress the public knowledge.

expedited all the preliminary arranges, and exerted herself to prevent any unsary delay in the completion of the lage. It is scarcely necessary to state that bject was warmly advocated by Evelyn w; his parents willingly lent themselves wishes of their son; while Mary, whose n had been haunted, ever since her father's terror at the dinner-table, with an unsal and most oppressive misgiving that catastrophe or disclosure might dash the red cup of happiness from her lips, felt ... II.

an indescribable load removed from her heart, when the settlements were mutually agreed upon and prepared, and the day of her nuptial was at last fixed.

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## CHAPTER XI.

nk not I love him, though I ask for him;
nut a peevish boy: yet he talks well,
what care I for words? Yet words do well,
he that speaks them pleases those that hear."
Shakspeare.

return to Eagle Wharf, both of whose i young inmates had struggled with sness and distressing thoughts, on the lat followed Hunter's intoxication, and rading exposure of which it had been asion. Only a few minutes before that affair, Helen, apparently conquered by uments and persuasions of her friend, her heart had previously surrendered etion, had agreed to grant an interview



sue nerseli One of indulgence grantly est similar com her judgust ledging his yet, such is when it is herself, in a tions, more possessed in Of this 1 could not or but the pene discover the

had long sighed in secret, the peerless paragon for whose possession he was willing to encounter every extremity of fate. Much as she regretted the disreputable inebriety under which this declaration was made, it afforded a welcome antidote to the coldness that had offended her in his letter. That he was in love with her, deeply, sincerely, passionately, and without the impulse of sordid motives-for intoxication draws forth the genuine and disinterested feelings of the heart—she now believed it im-Posible to doubt; and in that cherished conviction, the more she reflected upon his misconduct, the less did she find herself dis-Posed to punish it by denying him her presence, withdrawing from him the favour she had litherto conceded, though she might hesitate, and insist upon full satisfaction of all her misings, before she could grant a decided en-Degragement to his suit.

Poor Rose, in the mean time, was passing a

weeping night in a contest of feelings some times sharply distressing, sometimes redemed by soothing hopes and lofty aspirations. Not for one instant could her acute perceptions be deceived. Hunter's ebriety, which she attributed to some temporary and excusable excitement, had disclosed the real state of his affections. For her, and not for Helen, bad his passionate love effusion been intendedfact rendered not less indisputable by his eye than by his language. She herself was still the secret mistress of his heart, while he was openly paying his addresses to her friend. Ought she to condemn him for this? Oh, 16, no! She did justice to his real motives, to his forbearance, to his magnanimity, and col not only forgive, but pity, admire, and imite him. Never seeking to win her affections, & had been perpetually struggling to conceal subdue his own. With a noble generously, worthy of his exalted character, he had dethe shrine of filial and fraternal duty, not altosether uninfluenced, perhaps, by the discovery that he had unintentionally awakened a tender attrest in the bosom of Helen.

In the midst of fast-flowing tears, the highuled girl felt a proud pleasure in the thought surrendering up all the sweet though secret shes of her own heart, and dedicating herif to the felicity of her friends. "I am sure ey will all be happy," she inarticulately bbed:—"very, very happy, and what ought to wish for more? As for me, my fate is material. I am alone—an orphan—and I all have one consolation of which nothing n deprive me. I may feel my sorrows and y solitude for a time; but my failing health, y attenuated frame, my withering heart, every ing tells me, and most welcome are the lings, that I shall not feel them long."

When they encountered each other in the

merning, the holds of both friends bore evidence of their naving passed an anxious and restlemnique him in every other respect their expression was inferent. Helen's countenance was a unitarily alternations of restlessness, irrespectively alternations of restlessness, irrespectively alternations of restlessness, irrespectively and spiritual three of her friend, in spite of its failed aspert, were the composure of one whose soul is made up to a fixed, an exalted, an inference is made up to a fixed, an exalted, an inference purpose. It was clear that the mind had triumphed over the strength of her affection, and the weakness of her frame, but it was equally manifest that the victory had not been achieved without a desolating ravage.

A silence of some continuance, which both felt to be embarrassing, but which neither could summon resolution to dispel, was at length broken by Helen's exclaiming, with an assumed air of indifference: — " I need not disclose to you my thoughts, dear Rose, for I know your faculty of divining them. Tell me,

ere your's taking the same direction as

"Yes; for I was thinking of Mr. Hunter's

Right! Whether it be sympathy or intention, I know not, but you can always divento my mind. I must send some answer to I suppose; and yet I scarcely know that it eserves any notice whatever, after the unbeliance of which we were witnesses at night."

Not unbecoming in every sense," said one, with a languid smile; "for methinks or admirer never appeared half so handsome. It flush of his usually pale cheeks heightened brilliancy of his eyes; a joyous hilarity had seed away the habitual dejection of his intenance; and, as he sate, not ungracefully on his temporary throne, his noble features, that in the sun, and his locks waving in the land, the very beau-ideal of tipsiness; he

might almost have been taken for the beautif Bacchus returning in triumph from his Indi expedition."

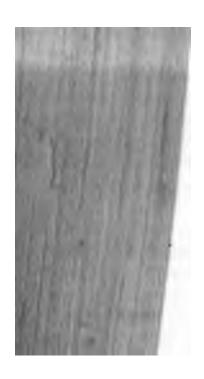
"Psha! what are the man's looks or of meanour to the purpose? You do not mean assert that intoxication can ever be becoming

"Certainly not; but neither can you you self deny that Mr. Hunter's inebriety, however ungentlemanly may be the offence, which one that I dream not of vindicating, may fested itself after a gentlemanly fashion. E alted as he was, his voice lost not its winnimelody; and his real nature, which upon the occasions throws off all disguise, came forth the light without exhibiting a single vulgar unworthy trait. Even in his unconsciousness his classical and poetical mind gave a redecting colour to his effusions, and he could the of nothing but the beautiful fictions of Greec or the still more exquisite imaginings of or matchless Shakspeare."

Lex ness, the vilest of all vices, is to stand excussed, if it display itself in the extravagant gesticulations and fustian hyperboles of a moon-struck player."

Of the sin I offer no defence; I only maintain that it brings forth the real character of the sinner, and that Mr. Hunter, in that temporary loss of reason, which leads many men, according to the vulgar saying, to make beasts of themselves, suffered no worse metamorphosis than to be transformed from a wharf clerk into the poetical and sun-crowned monarch of an enchanted island."

Why, it must be confessed," said Helen, who, as usual, had been affecting more indignation than she really felt, in order to provoke from her companion a vindication of her lover; it must be confessed that his exaltation improved his appearance, and that a little excess in wine, a casual tipsiness, is less offensive



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"Surely is

fficult to overlook; but the tipsiness could ot be unintentional, and you yourself have delared it to be an indefensible vice."

"Yes, where it is habitual and voluntary; but I can imagine fifty circumstances that may extenuate, if not wholly excuse, a solitary offence of the kind; and I could almost pledge my life that Mr. Hunter's will prove to have been an accidental and vindicable excess."

Indeed! are you serious in thus pledging reself for the sobriety of your client? Yes, see you are: your earnest, imploring eyes, requivering lips, assure me that you believe plicitly in his ability to acquit himself. recollect, dear Rose, that you are my adate, as well as his, ay, and by a much rer and tenderer tie than any that he can e; and tell me candidly, my sweet friend counsellor, how would you have me act in awkward predicament. What am I to do have this saucy epistle? Am I to consider it

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as a serious offer of his hand, or conclude that it was written under the influence of deep potations, and so toss it into the fire, to be no more seen or thought of than the fumes that engendered it?"

"You are trifling, Helen, and the occasion does not authorise levity. You yourself do not believe it to have been penned under any other inspiration than that of a settled purpose and a deep feeling. Your course of action is too clearly indicated to admit of doubt or deviation.

It is first indispensable that —. Hist! bark I hear footsteps approaching — it is Samuel' tread."

"I can distinguish no sound, but your sensess are so keen that if you chose to enact the part of Fine-ear in the fairy tale, I verily believe you would hear the grass springing out of the ground."

The accuracy of Rose's auditory nerves was presently confirmed by the entrance of the

placed a letter in the hands of Helen. "From Mr. Hunter," exclaimed the latter, colouring deeply as she glanced at the superscription. "Now, my fairy Mentor, how am I to act? Shall I break the seal, or return it, together with his love-letter, or rather with his offer of marriage, which is no love-letter, under a blank cover?"

Ridiculous question! this is mere coquetry

the affectation of an indifference which you

not, cannot, feel. If I thought you capable

so much mingled rudeness and cruelty,

hould from that moment cease to recognize

ou as my friend."

"Heyday!" exclaimed Helen, somewhat hashed at the detection of her own insincerity, and not a little surprised at the sudden vehenence of her companion, "your zeal transports you from an advocate into a combatant.

Well, then, since I have your sanction, not to

and see whether our king of the enchancisland can adduce any valid reason why should not be fined five shillings and set the stocks for drunkenness."

Unable as she had been to read the letter without a deep and manifest emotion, Hele exclaimed with an affected air of unconcersal although in a faltering voice, "Well, my litt sorceress, have you again divined the contents of this epistle in my tell-tale countenance, shall I submit it to your inspection?"

"Since you offer me your confidence, I must confess that the latter would be a much more satisfactory course."

So saying, Rose took the paper, and cast he eyes rapidly over its contents, which were the following purport.

"The miseries of a sleepless night, of a disordered frame, of remorseful and most humiliating reflections, I could endure with some degree of patience, for I have deserved them all; but the torments of suspense upon a point which must decide my whole future course of life, and, above all, the fear that I may seem, in the eyes of Miss Owen, infinitely more debased and culpable than I really am—these, these are sufferings which become the more intolerable the more I reflect upon them. The defence, or at least the extenuations, that I can offer for my temporary madness must be stated personally to be understood, for I am too miserable, too impatient, too agitated, to commit them to Paper. By your regard for justice, for mercy, I implore you to grant me a short interview. It will be the last time, unless with your special Permission, that you will ever be addressed by the almost heart-broken

"ALFRED HUNTER."

\*\* P. S. One more favour. If you allow me to call upon you, which I believe you are too

inst. too generous to refuse, may I request your name an hour when I shall not be likely encounter Mr. Bryant. He has dismissed not from my employment; he had a full right to do so, since I was every way unfitted for it; but he has accompanied this measure with coarse and contumelious language, to which I find it difficult to submit. My temper, as I fear you must have observed, has latterly become hasty, and I would not knowingly expose myself to the chance of forgetting the disparity of our years, the relation in which we stand, or the gratitude that I owe him for his past favourt.

"A.H."

Vain were the struggles of Rose to control her agitation, as she read, or rather devouch, the contents of the letter. In spite of the forced compression of her lips, the muscles around her mouth were involuntarily convulsed, and, as she lifted up her face to return the

per, her companion perceived that she was reping.

Heavens!" ejaculated Helen, "what can be occasioned this deep emotion? I saw thing so very affecting in what Mr. Hunter has written."

Rose made no reply until she had somewhat mastered her feelings, when she exclaimed:—
"Ah, Helen! you did not see, you did not notice, what I had detected before I began its perusal. Look at it again, and you will perceive that the paper is in various places marked with his——, marked with his——." Again she hesitated, and several seconds elapsed before she could indistinctly murmur the word "tears."

"Poor fellow!" ejaculated Helen, as her eye fell upon the spots which she had previously overlooked.

"Poor fellow!" repeated Rose, but in a tone infinitely more soft and tender than that of her

companion. "You must see him; you must grant his request," she continued after a paus

"Must!" cried Helen; "I don't see the mecessity, and I very much doubt the prudence of such a step. I don't like the tone of this letter. It exhibits peevishness at the detection, rather than penitence for the commission of his offence. He confesses himself, you see, ento be of a hasty temper."

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"Which is often, dear Helen, the best evidence of keen apprehension and sensitive feelings. Judge not of him by his present deranged state. Grant his request, hear his vindication, give him hope, and I will answer for his temper, because I know the goodness of his heart and the soundness of his principles."

"Then you know more of him than I do. Can you deny his pride, his haughtiness, at the very moment when he ought to be the most humble? See how he speaks of my uncle!"

"As there are elastic substances which only

most strenuously when Fortune seems the most resolved to crush them. Mr. Hunter has lost his appointment: blighted hopes, ruin, a sense of self-abasement, combine to distress and overwhelm him. Would you trample upon a fallen man? With an impassioned solemnity, he declares that he can extenuate his misconduct. He is entitled to a hearing. A rash and uncharitable judgment is often a worse offence than that which it blindly condemns. Helen, I appeal to yourself—you must, you will — you shall—see him."

\*\* Shall is a strong word, my little dictatress, and your reddening cheeks assure me that your feelings are not less vehement than your language; but, surely, surely, my dear Rose, you overlook the impertinence of his asking me to grant him a clandestine interview, for my hero, it seems, will not cross the threshold if

me owner of the house be within it. O's amende the independent the indelicacy, the grammoremy of my according to his request.

- Squarme in the present unfixed state of the medium. As Hunter, I think, has show much discretion in wishing to avoid any succession collision, and as to yourself, there exist nothing mannership mannership states indelicate. If your seeing time since I am made acquainter will your interview.
- An I is impressed that you wish to be now is in a second Heart with an arch smile because it that make ——."
- "I member in interposed Rose, in some antitisium: " turn as you make me your confinants, there can be nothing covert or claudesting in the meetings and explanations of lowers."
  - "Lawrence I cannot recognize that term

when applied to myself. At present, the reciprocity is of a somewhat Irish character. It is all on one side."

"It will not long continue so, if Mr. Hunter, as I confidently anticipate, can explain and extenuate his recent act of intemperance."

In this manner the discussion was maintained for some time, Helen, as before, urging objections for the very purpose of having them refuted, and of obtaining a sanction to the secret wishes of her heart; Rose, penetrating with her customary acuteness into her friend's motives, and conducting her, by the pride-saving road of apparent conviction and concession, to the point at which she had all along been wishing to arrive. The result of this mutual freeze between parties usually so frank and unreserved, was the concoction and transmission of the following brief note to the object of their joint solicitude.

Miss Owen presents her compliments to

Mr. Hunter, and begs to inform him, in arswer to his application, that she will be at home between one and two o'clock this morning.

"Eagle Wharf. Thursday."

Short as it was, this reply had not been adopted without much debating. Helen's sense of propriety and delicacy being somewhat revolted by the idea of making an assignation, she resolved that the terms of her compliance should be as formal and frigid as possible, and she accordingly wrote to her lover, as if she were making an appointment with a traderman.

It was known that both Mr. and Mrs. Bryss would be absent at the hour mentioned, a circumstance, however, to which she did not make the smallest allusion, conceiving it derogator, to lend herself to any thing that wore an make derhand appearance.

for a frank staightforwardness, can ecided by such female casuists as may shave been in love. Rose, who was satisfied with the matter to object to ser, took care to guard against any f purpose on the part of her friend, displayed more irresolution than she, by instantly despatching the note to ution.

ense more trying than that to which sexposed, while expecting the arrival tor, it would be difficult to imagine. ment and her affections were at open Even if the object of her partiality,



Rose, would condemn an union which in a worldly sense might be pronounced signally disadvantageous.

This objection, however, made but small and fleeting impression upon her mind. Sordid considerations of any sort were utterly foreign to her nature; delighting in generous actions, and a magnanimous liberality, the thought of redeeming Mr. Hunter from the degradation that saddened his soul, of lifting him up now that he was fallen and friendless, and of replacing him in his original and proper sphere, had so once elevated and entranced her bosom in many an hour of sweet and solitary musing. It is now, but less uninterruptedly than before, for the bright vision was clouded with menacing shapes that would not be put aside.

All the alleged evil habits of the coming visits' threw their shadows before; his misdeeds, and above all the fatal intoxication, of which the had been an eye-witness, rose up in judgment.

against him; and the result was a firm determination not to suffer her feelings to be entrapped, but to subject the culprit to a most severe and searching scrutiny, when he came up for judgment, and to dismiss him for ever from her thoughts, should he not come out from the ordeal with a character that would justify her regard. Strange as it may appear, we are, nevertheless, bound to record that, during this mental conflict, which might have seemed painful enough to absorb all her attentions, she found time to make frequent reference to her looking-glass, and had just altered the arrangement of her hair for the third time, when Mr. Hunter was announced.

How vain are the cold resolves of the judgment, how rapidly does their icy barrier melt away, when smitten by the electric fire of the feelings! Dispelled in an instant were all the attern resolves of Helen, as she marked the retched appearance of her lover. His looks

his complexion win and sodden; his swollen eyes recalled the tear-drops she had noticed in his letter, and his whole aspect confirmed the truth of his declaration that he was almost heart-broken. "Good heavens, Mr. Hunter!" she exclaimed in a tone of mingled alarm and compassion. "how ill you look! what is the matter?"

"I cannot look worse than I feel, for I am sick, sick at heart, sick with the bitterness of the soul," replied her lover in a hollow voice.

"O Miss Owen! If I do not throw myself upon my knees to implore, to supplicate, your pardon, believe me when I assure you that my heart is bowed down to the ground with sorrow and remorse, and that my spirit lies prostrate before you. I am overwhelmed, crushed, with a sense of humiliation, and with a profound anguish of soul, which you must gather from my looks rather than my language. Most

humbly do I entreat you to forgive me, if, in a moment of oblivion, unconsciousness, temporary madness, I uttered a syllable that could imply a feeling of disrespect towards one who possesses my entire —— my entire ——."

He paused in an evident embarrassment, from which Helen hastened to relieve him. Touched she was by the affecting humility of a spirit usually so proud and unbending, she had had time to recover from her first surprise, and her air was reserved, almost chilling, as she replied:-"I am not aware, sir, however indecorous might be your demeanour, that you uttered any thing, so far as I am concerned, of an unpardonable nature. When a man forgets what is due to himself, he is little likely to remember what is due to others. That I was equally shocked, sorry, and surprised at the indecorous spectacle of which I was an involuntary witness, I will not deny; but I can, nevertheless, for sive you, if you can so far explain or exentiare is ingin as to be fairly enabled to

I ma. I ma. and it is for this purpose that I may sample for present interview. Oh, there are not i beseech you, by one solitary assumes at medicity; yes, I repeat, solitary, sample, is imprecedented as it will be unfollowed. By marine I am temperate, I might almost sy maximizers. In this there is little merit, for there is no self-limital; my sobriety is constitutional. Never did I include in wine, ero when I possessed the means; and latterly I have never tasted it except when I have takes in occasional glass in this very house."

"Strange, then, that you should have been tempted to commit excess in the broad light of day."

deign to listen to me. Among other effects saved from the wreck of my late father's property and my own, was a hamper of Maddres.

alued less for its own sake than for that of ta donor, an East India captain, and an old friend of the family. Expressly reserved for joyous days, I need not say that it has hitherto remained intact, for our domestic calendar, since our unhappy reverses, has not known a single festival. Yesterday, however, Mr. Holloway, to whom my sister is betrothed, took un early dinner with us, previously to his rearning to the country. Elated by new and heering prospects, for there was a hope that be unhappy bar which has so long prevented is marriage was about to be removed, he ily proposed that we should try the contents the unopened hamper, a suggestion to which villingly acceded. I, myself, was in a high te of excitement; I had just written a letter I hope you have not been offended by it - a ter on which the fate of my whole future was to depend; and hopes, idle and premptuous, I fear, but not the less agitating,

contended in my bosom with the most paintful missivings. We drank to each other's succession a teast which it was difficult not to repeat an to reiterate, and my heated blood, for I was previously feverish with anxiety, becoming more and more inflamed, I sought to quench its fire by fresh bumpers. Still, my potations were by no means deep, but I was unused to them: and the hurry with which I accompanied my friend to the Borough, to see him into the stage that was to convey him away, completed the disorder of my faculties. Of what occurred after my return to the Wharf, I retain no recolsection whatever. Would to Heaven that it could be blotted from the minds of others # effectually as it is from my own! I have done; I have nothing further to urge in extenuation of my misdeed, than to remind you that it 75 partly occasioned by my anxiety on your so count, and to repeat that, had I been an bibitual toper, nay, had I even been accustomed

to moderate potations, I should not have been suddenly and completely overcome."

"It has been altogether a most untoward affair," said Helen, endeavouring to conceal beneath a demure look her delight at his satisfactory exculpation; "but, as you really seem to have been more unfortunate than culpable, and have made a much better defence than I had supposed possible, I have no hesitation in saying ——, I am willing to confess—in short, so far as I myself am concerned, I freely for-give you."

Do you?—can you?—is it possible? But I need not be surprised; you are all goodness, all condescension, all generosity, a conviction which emboldens me to ——."

he was about to urge his suit, and not wishing to decide upon it until he should have furnished the explanations she required, exclaimed:—

"I have before heard that some painful and

nonerro assurerable difficulty prevented the completion of your sister's marriage. Manual frameure as particle?

her engagement, and of the unfortunate circumstance that had indefinitely postponed her rapidals, justifying his motives in counselling her to embark her little portion in speculation, but hitterly condemning his rashness and want or judgment in selecting an adventure which had been attended with such disastrous consequences.

"I cannot better show my sense of your straightforwardness and candour than by imitting it." said Helen; "and, since you have voluntarily placed yourself on your defence, I may, perhaps, stand excused if I mentionall the other improprieties that I have heard hid to your charge."

These she accordingly recapitulated without hesitation, laying particular stress on his improper puted addiction to gambling and to improper

pany, as well as on his general improviæ. Admitting his infatuation as to the chase of lottery-tickets, always in the sanme hope of restoring the fortunes of his ther and sister, he cleared himself most mphantly from every other inculpation, exning such circumstances as had appeared vocal in his conduct, avowing his errors rever he felt himself to be in fault, and exting throughout his whole vindication a eanour so manly, dignified, and ingenuous, sled with a modesty, contrition, and sensiy so truly touching, that Helen, who ght he had never appeared to half so much ntage, thrilled with a generous exultation :h she found it almost impossible to con-, while her heart beat vehemently, but with ateful pulsation, in the delightful assurance all its tender predilections were abundantly fied, all its occasional misgivings effecly and finally dispelled.

- Azd. zew, Miss Owen," resumed Hunter, · are that I have extenuated, as I hope, my aimined errors and irregularities, and rebutted the injurious calumnies with which I had been assailed, may I stand acquitted of presumption or vanity, if I venture to declare my belief that I =15: still appear to you somewhat less deserving than I really am? We are all the creatures of circumstances; and much of my inimity of temper, and perhaps all my irregu-Limities of conduct, may be traced to this source. Under happier auspices, all these defects, if I know any thing of my own disposition, will be torn up by the roots and destroyed for eres, to leave me, as I trust, a wiser and a better man. My principles have never been justly arraigned, and it is because I feel myself at every way unworthy of you-pardon my and gance in saying so - because I know that I should devote myself, heart and soul, to your happiness-because I cherish the confident hope

cceeding in this object, that I have dared come a suitor for your hand, and now ly await your decision upon my future by."

th all Helen's vivacity and plain good, there was, as we have already stated, a of the sentimental, and even of the roic, in her disposition, which was power-developed whenever a particular chord made to vibrate. Any thing generous, magnanimous, instantly awoke her symes; and the instances of this nature which had encountered in real life, or in the e of her reading, immediately fired her the ambition of imitating them.

re was an occasion, as it appeared to her, partially realizing her dormant aspiration. There would be something noble as as rare in bestowing her hand and fortune "a brave man struggling with the storms te;" in selecting him, despite the antici-

pated opposition of her guardian and all the world, and in securing the marriage and happiness of her friend Harriet.

Perhaps the state of her affections kindled this generous enthusiasm; and it certainly lent a peculiar sweetness to her smile and tone, as she exclaimed with downcast eyes, and some little hesitation: - "Once more, Mr. Hunter, I will imitate your candour, and, if I appear to be too easily won, you must attribute it to my hatred of equivocation and deceit. Your manly and ingenuous defence has carried conviction to my mind; has increased - has satisfied-I mean to say that all my scruples are removed; and, in the firm conviction that your future course of life will justify my present corfidence, I confess my ---- my preposession is your favour, and thus tender you my hand # frankly as you have solicited it."

Utterly confounded at an acceptance not less cordial and flattering than unexpected—for less anticipated so quick a decision—Hunter of the proffered hand, and pressed it to his in a speechless bewilderment. He had dhis presumptuous suit in desperation or than in hope; from a sense of duty to re, not from the impulses of his own heart; though he had left nothing undone that it ensure it success, he could not expel his bosom a latent wish that it might That secret yearning was now for ever prointed; his self-sacrifice was accomised, his misery stamped with the seal of etuity.

verwhelmed with gratitude for the conce and the affections of Helen, his thoughts rted, nevertheless, to Rose Mayhew, now ver lost, with a throb of anguish that gave a foretaste of the life-long martyrdom to h he had doomed himself. Unable, after ral ineffectual attempts at coherent speech, ally his bewildered faculties, he struck his

hami upon his forehead, and rushed out of the result ejaculating in a boarse whisper:—"To marrow — to morrow — I cannot thank you now. I am overcome—astounded—air! air! I cannot breatile."

Vie. in the estimation of Helen, would have been the most eloquent effusion of love and grantule, when compared with this paroxysm of ampreciable emotion, which elicited all the tender sympathies of her nature. "Strange," sce excluimed, " that a man whose sensibilities are so acute should have been so cold and unimpassioned, not only in his letter, but in the whole course of our colloquy, up to the ray moment when I thawed the frozen barriers of his emotions by --- " Her soliloguy was interrupted by the sudden though noiseless entrance of Rose, her eyes glaring, her mouth half open, and every feature lighted up with an intense anxiety. Swift as thought, she me ? to Helen, placed her hands upon her shouldes, peered for an instant into her countenance, and then, bursting into a wild hysterical laugh, exclaimed: — "I see it — I see it in your looks! Is not every thing happily settled? Speak! speak! for God's sake, keep me not in suspense."

"Give me but a moment's time, my dear little picture of impatience, and I will tell you all. I cannot yet say that every thing is settled, but I have made more rapid progress than was, perhaps, quite decorous, more than could have been expected by any one unacquainted with the ductility of the female heart, when it is mollified by the affections."

"Every thing, then, is explained, and you have accepted him? One word, only one single word; I ask no more: why, why do you trifle with me?"

"Rather let me ask why are you so petulant? Prythee let my pride and reserve have a gentle descent, and suffer me, like Cæsar, to fall becomingly. Mr. Hunter's inebriety was an xcident which I, of all people, ought not to visit severely, since it arose in some degree from the perturbation and fever of his mind upon my account. Most triumphantly has he refuted the calumnies of Mrs. Skinner and others; and, as to the little infirmities and peccadilloes which we have so often noticed, he admits them candidly, and confirms your repeated averment, that they are solely ascribable to tpe morbid action of a mind placed in an uncong nial element. Perhaps I have been too sa guine, too pliable, too confiding, but I vielde implicit credence to his tale; I trusted his as surance that better circumstances would makhim a wiser and a better man. I believed him when he solemnly pledged himself to dedicate his whole future life to my happiness, and and - and - psha! Why cannot you spare one's blushes. Why do you force me to own that I confessed his affection to be returned,

and made him a formal surrender of my hand?"

Nature could no longer sustain the struggle which had so long agitated the bosom of the sensitive and fragile Rose. She attempted to ejaculate "Thank God!" but the words died inaudibly away, her eyes closed, her lips were compressed, her hands clenched, and she fell into the arms of her friend in all the corpselike rigidity of a fit.

#### CHAPTER XII.

"Friendship is constant in all other things.

Save in the office and affairs of love;

Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongue.

HARLES

ALTHOUGH this alarming paroxysm continuous for some time, it yielded at length to the customary remedies; when Rose, making light of her indisposition, which she attributed to an intense over-anxiety on her friend's account, earnestly intreated to know every thing that had passed at the recent interview. "What!" she exclaimed, when the recital was completed, "have you then made no arrangement with Mr. Hunter for your future interviews? Too well do I know his proper and manly pride, to

ieve that he will again pass the doors of s house, if he be considered an intruder."

Grammercy! my hasty friend! was this a rat for me to arrange? would you have me omplish impossibilities? You forget that ad no sooner 'owned the soft impeachment' my love, and stretched forth my hand in Grmation of my sincerity, than my caprius suitor, instead of throwing himself upon knees to thank me for my condescension, arted like a guilty thing and fled."

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" sighed Rose!
Oh, how deeply do I feel — how much do I
mpathize — how perfectly, I mean, can I
iderstand his distress and bewilderment!
It this important omission must be repaired;
happiness of too many persons is involved
this affair to permit the smallest delay. I
st allow you no excuse for hesitation, still
for change of purpose. Mary Lomax
ssesses your entire confidence, and well she

may, the where should we find a more discreted and minimum thy girl? I will see her this morning, instantly, and we will arrange every thing between us.

Figure 1. Now would have your actions like your actions. You would have your actions like your actions. The world have your actions like your actions. The I have not the smallest wish to handle up my marriage with such unseemly precipitation: nor if I had, would I allow you in your present weak and exhausted plight, to leave your couch or stir a single step in the business. Nay, I will not even grant you the privilege of our sex—you shall not talk, and so I will leave you to tranquillity and repose, which, I trust, are the only physicians you will require."

"For an hour or two I will patiently subsit to your orders, in the hope that I may the gather strength to break them;" and so so; ing, the affectionate girl drew her friend to be bosom, embraced her tenderly, congratulated her over and over on her approaching happiness, thanked her with an impassioned energy for having taken her advice, and then, with uplifted hands and glistening eyes, invoked upon her the choicest blessings of Heaven.

Once more left at liberty to commune calmly with her own thoughts, Helen's mind was presently made up as to the course she should pursue. Her natural candour rendered her averse from concealments of any sort, while her courage and decision made her despise all temporizing expedients, especially when she saw no reason whatever for being ashamed of her actions. That the Bryants would bitterly condemn her choice, and strenuously urge her to retract her consent, she fully anticipated; but this conviction, which would have led a timid and irresolute girl to delay the communication of her purpose, only prompted the strong-minded Helen to a more immediate dis-



viene j iin frais for you.

bere at Eagle W

should one mince the matter?—that I 'm going be married."

Married!" simultaneously ejaculated both additors, the aunt suddenly replacing her lifted wine glass on the table, while the uncle pped his nether jaw, and for a minute sed to masticate. The former, however, sently recovering herself, tossed off her imper, looked significantly at her husband, d then said, with a chuckling laugh, "Tush! ild! a nod's as good as a wink to a blind ree. I did not expect you and he would have ne to an understanding so rapidly, but I bet a guinea that I can name the happy."

I rather think not," replied Helen, ng.

'ooh! don't tell me. Didn't I give him nt myself?—and haven't I been constantly and nudging him on to strike up to you, the seems to have struck while the iron was hot. Come, come, Helen! you can't deceive me; I can see as far into a mill-stone as most people. You may finish your cold pork, my dear Mr. B.— you've no call to be alarmed; so far from it quite the reverse, and thanks to me for the whole of it. Now there, child! if I don't describe your sweetheart to the very life, without naming him, I give your leave to call me a blind buzzard."

"I shall be glad to have a specimen of your skill in divination," laughed Helen.

"In the first place, then, he is young, and genteel, and good-looking, and clever, rather above the middling size, with dark curling hair."

"Right; a palpable hit!" said Heles, somewhat surprised.

"You got acquainted with him under this roof! you had a sneaking kindness for imfrom the very first; he is the very man of all others that Mr. B. and myself would have

chosen for your husband, and his Christian name begins with an A."

Helen, who really began to imagine that her exert was discovered, though she could not at account for her aunt's evident delight at he match, when she had anticipated nothing the most furious opposition, was too much the most furious opposition.

head, have I?" cried the exulting aunt, as the snapped her fingers and chuckled aloud. Ha! ha! ha! let me alone for smelling out rat. My dear Mr. B., I congratulate you; this is what we have all along been wishing. It's all owing to me. You must confess I always was an uncommon good manager. Well, well, Helen dear! you needn't blush and look so sheepish; there's nothing to be ashamed of —it will be a particular good match for you, I can tell you that. Mr. B. and I most gladly give our consent to it; and I think we can

both promise that you will never repent your bargain, but find a most eligible and excellent husband in our dear Ambrose."

- "Ambrose!" ejaculated Helen—"Wh—
- "Why, Ambrose Bryant, to be sure! or son, the captain. Only think of the your slyboots keeping it all so snug!"
- "Snug, indeed," resumed Helen; "for he never opened his lips to me on the subject."
- "What do you mean, child? you speaking riddles. To whom, then, in the name of fale, are you going to be married?"
- "To Mr. Alfred Hunter!" said Helen, slowly and distinctly.

For some seconds utter amazement again deprived both her auditors of their bresh, which they had no sooner recovered, than they repeatedly ejaculated the word "Hunter!" in various tones of incredulous and increasing wonderment.

elen!" at length wheezed the agitated with a reproachful look, "you are much id of bantering and quizzing; I always in so. This is no time and no subject ing."

am quite aware of it, and I never was serious in my life. Allow me, in all the sity of truth, to repeat that I am engaged Hunter."

Bryant looked inquiringly in her face, eing convinced that she was perfectly i, he thought it best to put an end to the it once by blurting out, "Why the felalame duck, a bankrupt, hasn't a single not worth a brass button;" after which imed the conclusive look of a man who es that he has advanced an unanswer-jection.

all this I am perfectly aware," said, ealmly: "and it is the more fortunate, re, that I have money enough for both."

What many a begger, a discarded what many a begger, a discarded what many a content of cried the wife. "My desired by a content be serious. Why, with your handsome formure, you ought to insist upon having an equal property with your humanity."

There we differ, lear aunt. It is present the series i base a handsome fortune the series with riches in the man of many charge.

But it is so particular disrespectable the same time, quite saucy and arrogant, and cannot be made to feel that hungry dogs mass a cannot be made to feel that hungry

'Because you do not recollect that there are sorts of pride — that which envies and rets the dignity of another, and that which solely jealous to maintain its own. Mr. nter can fall without stooping."

But you will do both if you throw youraway upon him, and make a fool of reelf besides. Well! I did think a niece nine would have had a better taste, and show herself such a poor, mean-spirited hy, what will all your friends say, what the world say, if you make such a scan-us had match?"

I know what they ought to say; and the I shall be perfectly indifferent to censures, if they say what they ought,

This palavering is all gammon," cried rathful wharfinger. "You're a silly girl, ellow's a scamp, who will make ducks trakes of your property, and I'll never,



"I an willingly own mist:
"Ay, as I give you tune-hunte drunkard, a conceited, 1 worse than 1 piece, and m when you co fish swindle y e'en go to the do n't let him all."

It was, perh

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ed cheeks showed that she was prepared to icate with a proper spirit her own right of ce, as well as the character of her lover, contrageously assailed.

END OF VOL. II.

LONDON:

MORERL, JUN., LEICESTER STREET, LLICESTER SQUARE.



# JANE LOMAX;

OR

### A MOTHER'S CRIME.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE."

"REUBEN APSLEY," &c.

"Was 't not to make thee great,
That I have run, and still pursue, these ways,
That hale down curses on me?"

Massinger.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1838.

LONDON:
F. EH-BERL, JUN., I EICROTER STREET, LEICROTER SQUARE

## JANE LOMAX.

#### CHAPTER I.

"Surely we must be
Most strong in virtue, if we can give up,
After a life of dreary desolation,
All that we pined for in our earlier days—
A kindred spirit mingling with our own—
To fill the happiness of others' hearts."

by communicating the recent conversation een her uncle and aunt, and their indigmat her intended marriage with Alfred ter, had been lost for some time in a prod reverie; when her cogitations were enly interrupted by the unceremonious unce of Captain Bryant.

Vixed at this intrusion, and the more so so sis immediately concluded that he came to pester her with unwelcome advice, or still less and the minesees, she was preparing togical him i siccembit uncourteous dismissal, when her antiquations and her anger were both disperson by his exclaiming, with a cordial smile mi a familiar nod, "What, Helen! and so you have had a regular set-to, yard arm and 12 1 1 with the governor and the old lady, and threed them to sheer off, have ye? I must n't maziny, you know, must n't plot or colori against my commanding officers; but hing me if I am not heartily glad you have made so good a choice of a husband, and have stack to it like a brave girl; and if I can keed a hand in bringing you both into port, without flying in the face of the oldfolks say but the word, tell me how I can serre pos, and I'm your man."

" Ten thousand thanks for your good wishes,

:laimed Helen; "and, should I have occasion your assistance, I will embrace your offer frankly as it is made."

Sumed the captain, "for taking up poor unter, now that he is down in the world, and every body turning their backs upon him. I hnow him well, and though he is not fit a wharf clerk—no more was I, for that tatter—and carries his nose a little too high, can vouch for his being as good and howarble a fellow as ever lived. He's a entleman, every inch of him; I always had real regard for the chap; and he shan't be much adrift, though it be by my own father, ithout my throwing him out a rope."

While Helen had been waging battle in dence of her lover, she had kept every feeling, reept that of a momentary resentment, in erfect subjection; but this cordial and unexsected testimony to his good qualities completely melted her heart, and deprived her of her self-possession.

The tears glistened in her eyes, and her voice trembled with emotion, as she faltered, "Words cannot tell you, Captain Bryant, how gratified I am by your favourable opinion of Mr. Hunter, how grateful I feel for your friendly offers. Your kindness is the more acceptable, because I had reason to believe that you came upon a much less agreeable errand."

"What! — you thought I was coming to make love to you myself, I suppose. Ay, that's what you girls are always expecting, just as if there was nothing else for a fellow to do. Well, so I should if I had followed mother's advice, but I'm not such a fool. Too fond of the Charming Kitty to think of a wife just now; and if I did, shouldn't choose you, spite of your fortune. Beg pardon, always say what I think, but you are not one of my

sort. There's no accounting for tastes, you know."

"You need not apologise," said Helen; "and to prove to you that I am not offended at your frankness, I will ask one little favour, which has this moment occurred to me. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Hunter has, upon several occasions, been under obligation to you for pecuniary assistance?"

"Has he? well, perhaps he may. I had almost forgotten it; but I have no doubt he always repaid me punctually and honourably."

"In his present situation," resumed Helen,
"his finance may need a little replenishment;
and as there would be an indelicacy, perhaps
an impropriety, in my offering to become his
banker, you would much oblige me by conveying to him this hundred pound note, as if it
were a temporary loan from yourself. It may
spare some pains, both to Mr. Hunter's feelings

mu my rwn. I you will lend yourself to this mentily recognize.

Bases your generous heart! Let me shake mands with your I would go through fire and water to serve you and hang me, if I don't minist begin to envy Hunter his good look the me the note—I will take it to him is standy, for I am anxious to shake hands with time the last congruentate him on his making so noth a prese.

If went the good-natured captain, not, however, as execute his commission in strict accumulate with his instructions, for, as he say no reason whatever for concealing the source of the girk, and distained to assume the smallest merit that did not belong to him, he resolved that Heisen should have all the credit of he munificence.

The struggle of emotions by which Huster had been overcome when he rushed from the presence of his mistress yielded to calmer and more complacent feelings as he returned homewards.

"Thank Heaven! it is over," he mentally ejaculated. "I have done my duty - painful as it was; the effort has been made, and my mind feels relieved. Rose, I am sure, will penetrate and approve my motives-will appreciate the sacrifice I have made. It is better, infinitely better, for both of us. We shall now be separated for life-gradually we shall forget one another. Forget !--forget Rose Mayhew! Yes, I ought-I must-I will! Henceforward all my thoughts shall be devoted to the happiness of the generous Helen. What a noble frankness in the confession of her regard for me, what winning condescension in giving me her hand! Were I ever to forget her, I should be the most culpable as well as the most ungrateful of mortals."

These reflections assumed a still more soothing tone as he drew near home, and

reflected on the present delight which his tidings would diffuse, as well as the long prospect of future tranquillity and enjoyment which would be opened to his family by his contemplated union.

Light was his step as he entered the parlour, and his heart yearned within him as, drawing them to his bosom, and tenderly embracing them, he exclaimed, "Mother! Harriet! this is the first happy moment I have experienced since our reverses. Never, no not for a single instant, have I been able to banish the tormenting thought that I was the author of all your sore trials, and of the deep sorrows which you in vain endeavoured to conceal from me. It is now in my power to make some atonement for the wrongs, the cruel, though unintentional, wrongs that I have done you. Our humiliating struggles with poverty and disappointment are about to Helen Owen accepts me for her hucease. This, my dearest Harriet, secures your piness, for Holloway's parents will now ly consent to his marriage; and indeed I inclined to think, from Helen's minute tiries on the subject, and my knowledge of character, that the generous girl, as soon the possesses the power, will replace the ion of which you were so unfortunately rived, and thus enable Holloway to become immediate partner in the house of busi-

oor Harriet could only press her brother's d to her heart, and weep her gratitude; le the mother, in a transport of tenderness joy, laughed and cried by turns, utterly ble to decide upon what point she should n her congratulations, or how give vent to thoughts which crowded upon her in that crous jumble of the trivial and the serious, pertinent and the inapposite, which so often to her rambling discourse the semblance cross-reading.

"Dear Helen, dear Alfred!" she exclaimed you always were the best of sons—and such a great heiress, too! Only to think!—generous girl!—I congratulate you, my dear boy! Providence is very good to us, and I'm sure we ought to be grateful. May Heaven shower down its choicest—La! how that tiresome donkey keeps braying at the Linseed Mills! They say it's a sign of rain, and I do think we shall have a shower soon, for my corns have been shooting all the morning."

"If my hopes be not disappointed," said Hunter, "and I am sure Helen will do ber best to realize them, your future days, my dear mother, will be as happy and tranquil as your earlier life; and henceforth we shall only look back upon our troubles and trials to be thankful that we have passed them."

"And perhaps, Alfred, we may find resset to be thankful that we have had them; we shall all be the better for them, I dare say. And

shall we go back to live and die at dear Monkwell? The old house remains just as we left it, furniture and all, and it 's to be let for half its value. Dear, dear! I do believe I should kiss the very doorposts, and weep for joy if I could again call it our's, for I love every chair and table it contains, and often think of the garden and the sundial, and the seat under the walnut-tree, till my very heart aches. It was your poor father's wish that we should never leave it. Heigho! well do I remember when he was lying on his death-bed, and Pug was standing on a chair beside him, looking wistfully in his face: he whined and stretched out his paw— that is, the dog did — and he turned to me and said in a faint voice, (your father, I mean) I'm sure I think I hear him now as he exclaimed—Pug! Pug! you must n't pick that greasy bone on the carpet; what will Mrs. Tibbs say? take it from him, Harriet - Yes, your father, as I was telling you, said, 'I wish you to remain as long as you can at Monkwell, and to keep on the same servants; and as to the dumb beasts—' here his pains came on, and he never spoke distinctly again; but I knew what he meant: he wished me to keep the dog and cat, as an emblem and memorial, like, of our long and happy union; and so I will, please God; and these plants, too, that were in his bed-room when he died. Welladay! nobody knows how many tears I have shed upon their leaves, while trimming them of a morning, and thinking of the dear hand which used to do the same, and which is now—"

The involuntary twitching of her compressed lips prevented the completion of the sentence, and the poor widow sate with her eyes fixed upon the carpet, lost in the recollection of her past happiness, until the tears trickled unconsciously down her cheeks.

"Every arrangement as to our future mode of life," said the son, "must, of course, depend

on Helen; I know her to be fond of the country, and I see no reason to suppose that she would object to Monkwell as our permanent residence. How much I should be gratified by such a selection, it is needless for me to state, especially as we should then be within an easy distance of my friend Holloway and our dear Harriet—"

"La! so we should!" cried the mother, "and we could drive over to see her as often as we liked, in — the sugar-basin, Harriet! move it from the shelf — quick — quick! do n't you see Tabby is clawing at it?—Dear, dear! how glad I shall be to sit once more in the curtained pew of a Sunday, and to think that I shall be buried at last under the great yew tree, and lay my bones beside those of — Punch and Judy in the street again! why they passed only an hour ago. Well, it is comical now, is n't it, to see how cleverly they catch the cudgel when they toss it to one another?"

## CHAPTER II.

"What find I here? What demi-god
Hath come so near creation? Move these eyes?
Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
Seem they in motion?"

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

MARY LOMAX did not limit her sympathy to mere expressions of good will, cordial and sincere as they were, but took instant and active steps for overcoming all the difficulties that still stood in the way of her friend, and which Helen, consistently with a due regard to her own dignity, could not well have attempted to remove.

There would have been an indelicacy, under present circumstances, in her visiting Mrs. Sunter, whose son, on the other hand, could not be received in Engle Wharf. In this discussion, Many assentially befriended both parties. Mr. and Mrs. Lomax, willingly acceding to ter request, frequently invited Helen and Brutter to line and pass the day with them. Event Barrow, is already stated, had become manest in numate in Cypress House, and thus imming several weeks, the two lovers and their mistresses, impoying long and frequent interviews, and faily more and more delighted with mach other's society, gave themselves up to that entrancing interval of courtship, which a distinguished writer, himself a married man, has pronounced to be the best honeymoon.

In the brief snatches of friendly intercourse allowed by this seclusion, Helen marked with deep regret a distressing change in the deportment and character of Rose, who now confined herself to her own room with a rigour that almost amounted to imprisonment. She was often abstracted and in tears; and, when tenderly questioned as to the cause of her sorrow, would take offence, and reply with a petulant captiousness quite at variance with her usual demeanour. Such was her irritability that the smallest contradiction or disappointment excited her temper to vehemence and weeping.

Unsettled both in body and mind, she could neither remain long in one place, nor pursue her customary occupations, except at short and broken intervals. Fretful, impatient, and unhappy, she shunned even the society of Helen, betaking herself to solitude, and exhibiting an air of mysteriousness and reserve in all her movements. And yet so changeful were her moods, that she would sometimes throw herself into the arms of her friend, embrace her with a passionate fondness, supplicate pardon for her peevishness and estrangement, and chat with her in all the

emergy images of their former confi-

Lespering while she regretted this caprimus him in ter ment. Helen seldom intruded into her norm, especially when she found that she had regim to secure its inviolability by messing hersen in. On one occasion, however, himning some communication to make relative to her improveding marriage, she proceeded to her improveding marriage, she proceeded to her improveding marriage, the door spar, passed has a

Note was not there, but her drawing materials not yet put away, showed that she had not been pursuing her favourite amusement. What was the astonishment of Helen, as she approached the table, to see lying on it i minimum of Hunter, the likeness perfect, and the painting of the most finished and exquisite description. Thrilling with surprise and pleasure, for she instantly concluded that it was intended as a marriage present for herself, she

was hanging over and admiring the picture, when Rose re-entered the apartment, and had no sooner caught sight of Helen, than with flashing eyes and kindling cheeks she ran up to her, snatched the miniature rudely from her hand, and exclaimed in an angry and almost menacing voice:—"How dare you pry into my secrets? How dare you intrude into my room?"

"Dare!" repeated Helen, not less amazed than hurt at the agitation and vehemence of her friend. "If I am an unwelcome visitant, I will immediately withdraw; but, before I do so, allow me to assure you that I had not the remotest intention of prying into your secrets, or intruding upon your privacy."

At this remark, uttered in a tone of calm displeasure, Rose, recollecting as quickly as she had forgotten herself, sank upon a chair, shook her locks over her downcast eyes, clasped her hands imploringly together, and stammered out:—" Pardon, pardon—dear, dearest Helen, forgive me! I had intended, I had thought—but, overcome at seeing you here—the surprise—."

"Enough, enough," interposed Helen, affectionately pressing her uplifted hands:—"I now see and understand it all. You had intended this beautiful miniature as a little surprise for me, a wedding present, perchance; and the disappointment of having your secret prematurely detected put you for the moment into a pet. Am I right in my conjecture?"

Incapable of asserting an untruth, the confused girl evaded a direct reply by exclaiming:—"Bear with me, I beseech you; pity and forgive me. In sooth, I cannot account for my own unbridled petulance. Would you believe that at the instant I could scarcely refrain from striking you? I fear you will no longer love me; and I almost begin to hate myself, for I am become ever peevish and irritable, and

occasionally, as you have just witnessed, almost ungovernable. I sometimes fear I shall go mad."

"My own, my darling Rose!" cried Helen, repeating her embrace; "do you imagine that you can be less dear to me in sickness than in health? This irritability, and the unusual and exquisite keenness of your senses, which others, as well as myself, have lately noticed, are but so many evidences of disease. Your mind sympathizes with the morbid state of your health, and I look forward with pleasure to a change of air and of scene as the best remedies for your complaint."

"I had just finished—I hope you will accept it," said the still agitated Rose, who seemed not to have listened to what her friend had been remarking.

"Are you speaking of the miniature? I accept it with delight, and shall ever value it as a memorial of your friendship. But, in the

name of wonder, my dear little enchantress, how did you manage to paint it? and without my knowledge, too! When and where did he sit to you? Did you smuggle him into the house? did you render him invisible to all eyes but your own bright orbs, or did you summon one of the Genii, and bid him whisk you through the air to the abode of Mrs. Hunter? There must have been sorcery or magic of some sort."

"I have never seen him since he left the Wharf," hesitated Rose, hiding her blushes beneath her pendent tresses. "I painted it entirely from memory."

"What! this vivid likeness, this most speaking and animated portraiture, not only of his features, but of the mind and character stamped upon his intelligent countenance, have you delineated all these from memory alone? Astonishing! and almost as fearful as it is amazing, for I see in this preternatural acute-

ness of your faculties, a new proof of a disordered system. Why, why will you thus obstinately refuse to see a physician?"

"I need no better physician than yourself. You have just been prescribing change of air and of scene, and I shall very shortly follow your advice."

This was said in an emphatic tone, and with a significant air, which her friend did not immediately notice, for her eye had again fallen upon the painting, over which she hung, scrutinizing its minutest touches with an increasing wonderment and delight.

"So, then, it was for this," she exclaimed, "that you immured yourself so often and so long in your own room; it was for my gratification that you forsook all your ordinary pursuits, and ran the risk of still further injuring your health, already so delicate and precarious. Dear girl! how shall I ever repay you for a kindness so considerate and devoted!"

Poor Rose, who had, in truth, painted the miniature for herself, and who felt, therefore, that she neither deserved the gratitude nor the caresses lavished upon her, shrunk from them without daring to confess the reason of her repugnance, further than by pleading a bad headache.

"It has, doubtless, been occasioned by your stooping so long over your painting," said Helen; "and, since you say it is now quite finished, I will secure you against any increase of your malady, by bearing off its cause."

So saying, she kissed and again repeatedly thanked her for her most acceptable present, and left the apartment, carrying the miniature with her.

Hunter, whose pride disinclined him to ask favour of any sort, and who felt that, in the manifold marriage, he had nothing whatever to offer in return for all the manifold advantages he would derive from it, shrank with a sensi-

tive delicacy from any attempt to influence the decisions of Helen as to their future mode of life.

In one of their confidential colloquies, however, it seemed as if she had penetrated the wishes of himself and his mother; for she turned the conversation to the subject of Monkwell, their former residence; and gracefully appearing to ask, while she was conferring a favour, inquired whether he would object, since she herself had a decided repugnance to a London life, to take up his abode once more in the ancient dwelling-place of his family.

"Nothing could be more delightful to me," eagerly exclaimed Hunter; "and, if I have hitherto refrained from alluding to this subject, it was solely in the fear that I might be putting a constraint upon inclinations which" wish in every respect to study and to follow."

"To succeed in that object, you must be frank in every thing, and state your desires as VOL. III.

unreservedly as I do mine. At this very moment I come to you as a petitioner, and I shall prefer my suit like a bold and sturdy beggar. You do not pique yourself, I believe, upon your skill as a frugal manager; I myself am utterly unversed in all the mysteries of housekeeping; under such auspices our fortune, competent as it is, might prove insufficient to secure us against embarrassment. An utter stranger, besides, at Monkwell, I shall feel as if I had dropped from the clouds, and shall sigh for some elderly chaperone to introduce me to the many families in the neighbourhood with whom you are acquainted. Now, what a comfort it would be to me, what an advantage to both of us, if dear Mrs. Hunter would come and live with us, and not only undertake those domestic duties, which I am so little qualified to perform, but enact the friendly part of my guide, companion, and monitress, in the manner I have pointed out."

"A thousand thanks, my generous Helen!" cried Hunter, snatching her hand and pressing it to his lips:—"You have anticipated the wish that was of all others the dearest to my heart. Most deeply do I feel your delicate kindness! I only fear that, if you thus heap favours upon me, I shall become as bankrupt in gratitude as I am in fortune."

"Then, let it not be considered as a favour at all; it was not so intended; and, since we are both of us too proud to be under obligation to one another, our domestic arrangements shall assume the more independent form of compromise and exchange. Thus Alfred Hunter, on the one part, nominates his mother as a perpetual resident and inmate at Monkwell; and Helen Owen, on the other hand, claims the same privilege for her friend, Rose Mayhew."

"Rose Mayhew!" ejaculated Hunter, colouring deeply, and starting with surprise.

"Yes, Rose Mayhew. It is an old agree-

ment between us that whichever married first should receive the other as a companion in her house."

"Rose Mayhew!" reiterated Hunter, scarcely conscious of what he was uttering.

"Ay; is there any thing so Gorgon-like in the image conjured up to you by the mention of her name, that you should look thus confounded and amazed?"

"Oh no, no, no!" cried Hunter, endervouring to collect himself; "quite the contrary; she is every thing that is—an inmate a resident, did you say?"

"Yes; I would wish her to be considered to belonging to our family, not less than your mother."

"Your wishes, dear Helen, must, of course, be mine; but this arrangement is so strange, so unexpected, so ——, does it not strike you that there will be something very awkward, very objectionable, in having ——,"

His embarrassment prevented the completion of the sentence, to which, however, Helen promptly answered by exclaiming: — "Awkward! objectionable! what, in having as a dweller among us the bewitching Rose Mayhew? You amaze me. I really do not understand you. I should have thought that you would have been delighted at the proposition, instead of conjuring up difficulties where none whatever exist."

"I have no right to object to any thing; I merely ventured to suggest—I was only apprehensive that ——."

"Fiddle-faddle! I will not have you apprehend any thing but pleasure and gratification from the society of so charming, so gifted, a creature. She is utterly without fortune, or protectors; so that, on her account, not less than on myown, I must faithfully adhere to our agreement. Allow me to add that it would be ingratitude on your part, were you, upon this occasion,

to entertain a thought that would interfere with it, for you possess not in the whole world a friend more true, more cordial, more zealous, and more persevering, than Rose Mayhew."

"I believe it, I believe it," cried Hunter, deeply affected; "but I know not how I have merited her regard."

"Oh, with what energy has she fought your battles!" continued Helen, kindling into fervour, as she sang the praises of her friend:—
"With what an impassioned eloquence did she extenuate your frailties, and vindicate you against every evil report! I know not whether my declaration will give her any additional title to your gratitude; but I can truly declare that I should never have consented to bestow myself upon you, but for the active interference and the almost incessant persuasions of Rose Mayhew."

Hiding his face in his hands, in order to conceal as much as possible the vehences struggle of his feelings, Hunter could only ejaculate, "Noble—generous — magnanimous girl! God bless her!" Helen fortunately commenced a new eulogy of her protégée, which, affording him time to recover himself, he exclaimed, when she was again silent, "I have but one question to ask. Is Miss Mayhew a party to this arrangement?"

"I have never formally mentioned the subject to her, because I have always taken it for granted that she would adhere to our contract. Upon this point we will have an immediate explanation, though I cannot for a moment doubt that she will gladly perform her share of our engagement."

"If it be your wish and her's, I repeat that it must, of course, be mine also," said Hunter, who, in order to break off a conversation which was becoming every moment more painful and agitating to his feelings, pleaded an engagement, and hurried from the room.

"This is marvellous," thought Helen to herself, when he had left her, "and not less disagreeable than strange. It is manifest, palpable, glaring, that he has some objection to Rose, which he hesitates to state; that he totally disapproves of my plan for domesticating her at Monkwell; and, though he has consented to it, has yielded with a woful bad grace. For some time past, indeed, I have noticed that he has cautiously shunned her society, and that she has equally avoided, unless when called upon to defend him, all mention of his name. Can he have quarrelled with her, can he have any personal objection ----? Imporsible! one might as well object to an angel. have heard of men who could not bear a rive even of her own sex, in the affections of their wife. This must be the secret reason of the difficulties which he could not distinctly define, or which, as is more likely, he was ashamed to state. Hunter, I fear, has a spice of jealousy in his disposition, and, as this failing is the result of a too sensitive and engrossing love, I ought not to judge it harshly. Neither ought I to yield to it too submissively. My compact with Rose shall be faithfully executed, and Hunter shall find that my attachment to my friend, fervent as it is, will never interfere with the more sacred and tender claims of the husband. The same sense of duty that makes me firm upon this point, will render me obedient to him upon every other."

As this subject was now paramount in her mind, Helen took the first opportunity of sounding the intentions of her friend, by stating the arrangement she had made relative to her future residence at Monkwell, and expressing a hope that it would prove agreeable to the wishes, and beneficial to the health, of Rose.

"My best, my dearest, my only friend!" exclaimed the latter, pressing Helen's hand to her heart, and endeavouring to smile through
her tears:—" I told you in a late conversation
that I would take your advice, that I would set
a change of air and of scene, for the benefit of
my declining health. I have done so, but it is
not to Monkwell that I am about to remove.

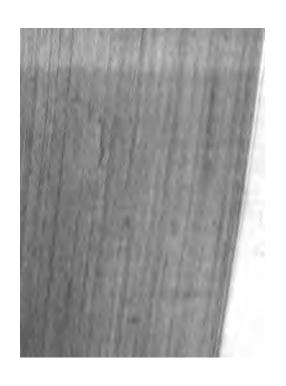
No, Helen, I feel that I have a grave, a sacred
duty, to perform to you, to myself, to — to
—to another. The day of your marriage must
be the day of our separation: we must part—
the very word almost chokes me, but nothing —."

"Separate — part!" ejaculated Helen in a tone of profound amazement; "I do not understand you. Are you serious?"

"Do not interrupt me, I beseech you," resumed Rose; "and, when you have heard my statement, spare me, for pity's sake, spare me all appeal against a resolution which has been deliberately formed, and in which I shall inflexibly persevere, because it has been dictated

by my conscience and a solemn sense of duty. You will remind me, I know, of what you have termed the compact between us. It was no agreement upon my part. Often as it was urged by you, I never gave assent to it, except by my silence. For the generosity, the kindness, the forethought, that suggested it, I was duly grateful; but I would never bind myself to an engagement, of which it was easy to anticipate that many circumstances might prevent the performance. This contingency has arisen. Ask not my reasons, question not my motives; I must not, cannot, will not, be interrogated. Suffice it to state, once for all, that they are imperative and insuperable."

Not less hurt than surprised, Helen gazed inquiringly upon the countenance of her friend. Its expression of deep distress, mixed with an inexorable pertinacity of purpose, deterred her from disobeying her injunctions, especially



be you I bu have ever. dear i I taken secure

which I shall gladly consult you, now that you are aware of my intentions."

"Companion!" exclaimed Helen. "My poor dear Rose! this will never, never, never do. Your delicate health, your exquisitely sensitive mind, utterly disqualify you for such an employment. Have you considered what it is to be the nurse rather than the companion of a sickly peevish old lady, whose inferiority to yourself, in every thing but fortune, will make you the more bitterly feel the sense of your dependence: who will render you the confident of her revolting maladies, and the recipient of all her whims and ill-humours; who, because you are not a servant, will expect you to discharge those functions that a menial would refuse; to be answerable for the health of her cat, to wash her lap-dog, to minister to the wants of a screaming perroqueet, and to clean out the cages of half-a-dozen canarybirds?"

"But every lady in want of a domestic inmate does not necessarily keep such a menagerie as you have been describing, nor is it indispensable that she herself should be a testy, capricious, and querulous invalid."

"In that case, she will need no other companion than her own healthy mood and happy thoughts. As none but the halt and the infirm require a crutch, so you may depend upon it, dear Rose, that none but the mental cripple will advertise for a human walking-stick."

"You are supposing an extreme and improbable case, and one to which, even were I doomed to experience it, I should be under no necessity of submitting longer than it suited my convenience. In fact, Helen, you are proving too much; you object to every thing that I propose. My mind, I tell you, is made up — firmly, definitively, irrevocably. I must not, cannot, will not, be thwarted."

The mood of the speaker became changed,

her wan cheek reddened, her eye sparkled, she began to talk with an energy that almost amounted to exasperation, and rapidly paced the room in a state of excitement, which herfriend, knowing its morbid source, could only pity and lament.

"Well, my sweet Rose!" she exclaimed in a soothing tone; "you shall try this plan, since you have made up your mind to it, but only as an experiment, and upon the condition that, when you are tired of it, which, if I am any thing of a prophetess, will soon occur, you shall return to one whose house, whose arms, whose heart, will ever be open to receive you. Even now my very soul is sick at the thought of our separation."

"And do you think that I am at this moment lying upon roses?" asked her friend in a mournful accent. "I say nothing of my own sufferings, for I would not needlessly distress you, and I am silent about the long debt of gratitude I owe you, not only because words would be utterly unavailing to express it, but because I am endeavouring to evince it in the most effectual manner, by tearing myself away from you."

"This I cannot pretend to decipher, dear Rose, nor do I understand you better when you talk of gratitude, since I feel, by the very fear of losing it, how much my happiness has depended on your society. Our pursuits, our pleasures, our little sorrows and disappointments, have for some years been almost identical. We have been more than sisters; never, never, as I fervently hope, shall we be less than friends, for, however the tide of life may separate us for the moment, I feel persuaded that the yearnings of our hearts will soon bring # together again. During the progress of your experiment, for I consider it as nothing else, I shall be cheered by this hope, as well as by the trust that your health will be benefited by a change of air and scene. In this I shall have the greater confidence, if you will faithfully promise me, during your short exile, to consult some eminent physician."

"Yes, yes," cried Rose, with a sudden air of significant animation, "this I can, I do promise you. I hope soon to see one who is the most eminent of his tribe, one who has never failed to effect a cure, however inveterate the disease—one who has no sooner placed his finger on your pulse, than his friendly magic not only heals all the maladies that flesh is heir to, but all the sickness of the soul — one who needs not to be consulted a second time, for his patients suffer no relapse, and, being once cured, are cured for ever."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Helen, incredulously.

"And who may he be, this marvellous practitioner? I should like to consult him myself."

"O no—no—no. I hope not—I hope not," cried Rose; "for his name is —— Death!"

And so saying, she glided out of the r her eyes flaring, and her pale features lig up with a look of wild exultation, that she pang of sudden anguish and alarm to the lof her friend.

## CHAPTER III.

"Full oft we see
Cold wisdom waiting on superfluous folly."
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ELEN, who had determined to remain under protection of Mr. Bryant until she came of was by no means sorry to receive the ratulations of her friends on the arrival of important period; for many circumstances latterly combined to render her abode at e Wharf more than usually disagreeable. ough both her uncle and her aunt had given all attempts to dissuade her from her obte and wilful self-sacrifice, as they termed approaching marriage, they carried on a

and a tenders in which none but coarse and regar made attacks in which none but coarse and regar made attacks by disappointment, would have indiagrat. Their conversation, rarely disappoint in the first generally levelled at her, was a fall wise saws and modern instances," and modern instances in the first spurned the admonitures of their intends, and thrown themselves two productions for the forms hunters.

Sometimes the weethy couple would dilate, with an excessible parental pride, on the happiness and wealth, which with them were convertible terms, reserved for the fortunate woman
who should be selected for a wife by their an
Ambress, against whom, nevertheless, they
would occasionally hunch a sharp reproach for
his omitting to secure the prize which they had
been so carefully enriching for his caption, and
had placed so purposely within his reach.

Whether or not Jacob Bryant, keen man of

business as he was, would have proved himself so diligent and so successful a manager of his ward's property, unless he had all along imagined that he was catering for the future wife of his own son, we cannot determine; but certain it is that Helen herself was surprised at the unexpected accumulation of her fortune during her minority.

On the day following her twenty-first birthday, her guardian placed in her hands an account current, which did infinite credit, not only to his own financial skill and trustworthiness, but to the calligraphy of John Hoggens, the new clerk. He himself carefully read it over to her, explaining every item with a technical precision not always intelligible to his auditress, and, after having received from her a written acknowledgment of its accuracy, which she delivered with an expression of the most heartfelt gratitude for his good stewardship; he accompanied her to the Bank, where he transferred into her name, and made her enter her acceptance of it in the books, a large amount of stock which, at the price of the day, came to the exact fractional balance that was due to her.

All the way back to the Wharf was devoted to an exceedingly well meant, but equally tedious, lecture on the difficulty of acquiring, and the facility of dissipating, a fortune, coupled with the most earnest advice that in the marriage settlements the whole should be strictly tied up, so as to protect it from the extravagance or perilous speculations of her husband.

Helen was neither covetous nor purse-proud, and it was precisely on that very account that she was highly gratified at finding herself so much richer than she had expected, since her money would enable her, without sensibly encroaching on her 'own income, to replace Harriet's marriage portion, a design she had for some time past entertained; while the resi-

due was more than sufficient to support a handsome establishment at Monkwell, and to restore
to the name and family of Hunter the full consideration it had formerly enjoyed in the neighbourhood. To mark her gratitude to Mr. Bryant,
she presented to him four massive silver dishes,
a present the more acceptable and opportune
because the annual dinner to his brethren of
the Fishmongers' Company was now approaching.

In conformity with the anxious wish of Mrs. Hunter, who had set her whole heart upon the measure, it was determined that the triple marriages of Helen with her son, of Holloway with her daughter, and of Mary Lomax with Barlow, should be solemnized at the same time, and in the same church.

Some little delay intervened from Holloway's inability to leave his business in the country; but the nuptial day had at length been fixed by all parties, and the reader must imagine

the bustle, preparation, and anxiety, that now agitated the inmates of Eagle Wharf, of Cypress House, and of the lodgings of Mrs. Hunter, whose incessant locomotion, whose ludicrous cross-purposes, and concurrent fits of laughing and crying, might have easily persuaded a stranger that she was mad with joy.

To add to the busy interest of the moment, Evelyn's father was immediately about to launch a large East Indiaman from his dock below Blackwall, a circumstance which be deemed of scarcely less importance than the marriage of his son.

Of the ceremonies and festivities usually attendant upon a launch few can be fully aware, unless they happen to have resided in the vicinity where such scenes are displayed. For some time the whole neighbourhood had been engaged in hiring boats, and making arrangements to witness the spectacle; and, as sight-seeing and amusements were now the order of

the day with the happy and bustling Mrs. Hunter, she proposed that a party should be formed to sail or row down to Blackwall, and, after having seen the launch, to seek some pleasant spot on the banks of the river, where they might land, and partake of a pic-nic dinner.

Her proposal was carried by acclamation, and orders were given for preparing the handsome pleasure-boat in which Benjamin Lomax had been accustomed to take his little excursions on the water. Much to his regret, his increasing malady, which had latterly confined him to his room, would not allow him to accompany his friends. Barlow's parents could not absent themselves from the dock, especially as they were to have a large dinner-party and a ball at night; the Bryants had a boat of their own, wherein the portly wife, fine as a lady mayoress, took her station, with her pursy husband by her side, while their servant, in a flaming new livery, was squeezed into the stern; Lomax,

who had not yet recovered from the agony of terror excited by the reported return to Europe of Edward Ruddock, dreaded publicity of all sorts, and refused to pass beyond the walls of Cypress House.

Holloway had not yet arrived in London. The party, therefore, which was to be chaperoned by Mrs. Hunter, consisted of her son and
daughter, Barlow and Mary Lomax, Helen and
her friend Rose. The latter had for some time
resisted every solicitation to join the excursion;
but a secret curiosity to witness the deportment of Hunter as the betrothed husband of
Helen, the yearnings of an affection which was
by no means extinguished, and the desire to
enjoy, possibly for the last time, the society of
the two beings who were dearest to her upon
earth, so far ailenced the objections of her
better judgment, that she at length consented
to the wishes of her friend.

One other individual contrived, unwelcome

as he was to most of them, to intrude himself into the party, and by his presence produced results equally important and unexpected. No sooner was the excursion proposed, than Jasper Pike, who affected a juvenile delight in all parties of pleasure, but who, on this occasion, was in reality attracted by the prospect of seeing the launch, and partaking of the subsequent feast at Mr. Barlow's without paying for boathire, begged to be included, offering to act as steersman, for which office he had qualified himself, by his frequent trips in a friend's boat, to eat white bait at Greenwich.

His proposal was received with an expressive silence, which the speaker, who was by no means easily repulsed, construed into a general acquiescence, and immediately began, with his usual flippant and importunate forwardness, to lay down the whole plan of proceeding for the day. The discovery that the dinner was to be a pic-nic, to which he would be expected to

contribute, threw him all aback, but it was now too late to recede; and, making a virtue of necessity, he liberally offered to supply the bread, declaring that he had known several dinners entirely spoilt by the omission of this indispensable article. Mary and Helen, detecting the meanness of his motive in this selection, interchanged smiles sufficiently significant to be observed by Pike, who had the grace to add that he had merely mentioned that particular article because he could procure it from a baker in his neighbourhood of a quality superior to any other in London.

Every thing on the morning of the launch wore a gay, exhilarating, and auspicious aspect. It was that delightful season of the year when the spring is just ripening into summer; the morning sun threw a golden bloom over the waters in the direction of Blackwall, where an eastern breeze had cleared the atmosphere, so that the innumerable boats gliding along the

river, and the successive tiers of shipping, many of them decorated with flags in honour of the occasion, were brightly and distinctly visible. Rolling slowly and majestically across a forest of masts, the congregated vapours still hung over all the westward portion of the city, assuming a roseate tinge from the beams of the sun, and imparting, to the shrouded metropolis, as widely scattered towers, domes, and steeples, gradually emerged from the dense mass, a mysterious vastness and grandeur which stimulated the imagination, and elevated the whole scene into sublimity.

When they arrived at the place of rendezvous, Mrs. Hunter and her party found Pike waiting for them, with a large basket hanging on his arm, containing, as they inferred from its bulk, a plentiful supply of the bread which was to form his contribution. This he carefully deposited in the stern of the boat, and then, with a brisk, dapper air, meant to be particularly

proteinial and a smart vulgarity which he misment for politeness, tendered his assistance to the latites and bustled about the stowage of the harmours and hand-baskets laden with the store materials of their dinner.

In a short time all was arranged, the company twick their seats, and the boat floated off, two watermen plying the oars, for the state of the wind did not allow them to hoist sail, a circumstance not a little consolatory to the timid Pike, who sat bolt upright in the stern, the basket between his feet, the tiller strings in either hand, while he looked sharply out to the right and left, in search of any approaching danger.

Boats of all sorts, many of them adorned with awnings and gay streamers, floated rapidly down the stream, the faces within lighted up with pleasant anticipation, while the banks on either side resounded to cheerful voices, merry greetings, and vivacious laughter. The party whose histories we are narrating formed a partial exception to the general hilarity. There is a deep and heartfelt happiness, which, by awakening sentiments of devout gratitude to Heaven, partakes much more of a serious than a lively character. Such were the present feelings of our lovers, who were sobered by the approaching change in their mode of life, and the prospect of the felicity that awaited them.

Other and less grateful thoughts deepened the pensiveness of Hunter. He had not seen Rose for some time, and the deteriorated health expressed by her looks, combined with her manifest dejection, filled him with a sadness not altogether unmingled with self-reproach. Well might she wear a desponding aspect, poor girl! for she was mentally contrasting the happiness that surrounded her, with her own forlorn and desolate plight, with the wretchedness of her own disappointed and withered heart.

Of the countless throngs that gave gaiety to the river, every individual possessed either parents, relatives, or friends. She herself had 1:0 parent, no relative, and, with the solitary exception of Helen, from whom she was shortly about to part, perhaps for ever - she had no friend. Unprotected and unguided, she was to be thrown upon the wide world to fill an equivocal and dependent station, which could hardly fail to expose her to many mortifications, while it might not improbably subject her to trials and dangers which she hardly dared to contemplate, because she felt herself peculiarly unfitted to struggle with them. little such reflections were calculated to raise her spirits, was evinced by her mournful silence, her downcast eyes, and her abstracted air.

Pike endeavoured to conceal his own apprehensions, from which he was never entirely free, by singing snatches of nautical songs, and

affecting a pert vivacity, while the benevolent Mrs. Hunter, her face beaming with complacency, and exclamations of wonder and pleasure for ever upon her lips, simpered, and laughed, and talked cross-readings for all the rest of the party.

The watermen repeatedly requested Pike not to hug the shore, but to steer the boat into the middle of the river, that they might have the full benefit of the tide, which was favourable.

"My good friends," replied the bachelor, who could not even affect to think of any body but himself, "I never throw away a chance. You can doubtless swim—I cannot; so that, in case of a capsize, we should not start fair. Upon occasions of this sort, you must be well aware that every lubber who can hire a craft pushes it into the middle of the stream, whether or not he can handle an oar or manage a sail. See how they are all huddled together, and how

easily some of them might run us down! Why should we rush into danger?"

"Danger!" echoed one of the boatmen, with a slight expression of contempt, "where's the danger to come from?" And he then whispered to his comrade, "I say, Tom, a shy bird that, ar'n't he? Never on the water afore, I reckon, though he handles the tiller so knowingly. He seems to be one o' them chaps that may run ye aground, but won't never run ye into any other scrape."

Little did the utterer of this averment dream that it was so speedily to be disproved. The fatality which almost invariably threw Pike into the very midst of peril from his overanxiety to avoid it, was about to be alarmingly signalized.

Opposite Limehouse, a collier was hauling out of the tier, when the slacking rope broke, and, the tide swinging her rapidly round, her bowsprit was carried athwart the course of

the pleasure-boat, so as to threaten her mast. With common presence of mind and promptitude of hand, Pike might have steered clear of the coming danger; but he had no sooner perceived its approach, than, abandoning the tiller rope, he hastily dived into the basket beneath his feet, whence he snatched a patent lifepreserver, his invariable companion on all water excursions, and hastily threw it over his head. While struggling into it, in an agony of terror, the mast struck the collier's bowsprit, and a faint cry announced that the shock had thrown Rose into the water. Aroused from his deep reverie by the sound of her well known voice, Hunter was no sooner aware of the catastrophe, than he plunged headlong after her, exclaiming, "Rose! my beloved Rose! save her! save her!"

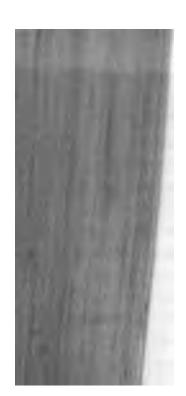
Assisting the action of the tide by the violence with which he sprang from the side of the tottering boat, it instantly capsized, and the whole party, amid the loud screams of the females, were precipitated into the water. A crowd of boats hurried instantaneously to their assistance, and Helen, almost as soon as she had been immersed in the waves, found herself snatched from them, and sitting in a wherry, the people of which, in answer to her terrified inquiries, bade her be under no alarm for her friends, the whole of whom had been already rescued, without any other injury than a momentary struggle with the waters. Having received full assurance upon this point from a variety of witnesses, she earnestly entreated her rescuers to convey her immediately back to Eagle Wharf, a request which was met with the kindest and most prompt compliance.

Just as they had put about for this purpose, a four-oared boat pulled alongside, on the seat of which Helen beheld her friend Rose reclining in an apparently unconscious state, while Hunter hung over her, almost distracted with

alarm, pressing her hand to his lips and to his heart, and wildly ejaculating, "Rose, my long, my secretly beloved Rose! speak to me, for God's sake! I shall go mad if I have rescued thee too late. Oh hear me, and give some signs of life, thou best, thou dearest, thou sole object of my affections!"

As if revived by the sound of his voice, the party thus passionately addressed opened her eyes, cast a bewildered look around her, and then, faintly exclaiming, "O Mr. Hunter, dear Mr. Hunter, is it you who have saved me?" sunk blushing into his arms, and was pressed in an ecstacy to his bosom.

At this juncture, some intervening boats shut them out from sight; but Helen had already seen and heard enough — too much! The whole scene swam indistinctly before her eyes; hollow murmurs rang in her ears; a sudden sickness of the heart oppressed her; and she fainted. When Helen recovered her



## sitting by her

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## CHAPTER IV.

"——What! gone without a word?

Ay, so true love should do; it cannot speak,

For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it."

SHAKSPEARE.

EVBLYN BARLOW, naturally singling out his oved Mary as the first object of his solicile, supported her without much difficulty, for was an expert swimmer, until they were en up by one of the numerous small craft t thronged to their assistance. Mrs. Hunter I Harriet, after clinging together in some le peril, were rescued by another party. The termen held on to the capsized boat, until ne of their comrades came to their assiste; and thus have we satisfactorily accounted



remained 1 water, and for his life. Terrified of the fem: destroy the was his first rest, toward distance. He instead of be steep sides as placed the mad adjusted at fi mitted himseli slipped along h with his feet, w raised above the unable, of course, to call for assistance, or to draw attention to his drowning state in any other way than by the rapid motion of his imprisoned feet. For some moments he escaped notice, the general anxiety being directed towards the females, so that he was almost at the last gasp, when the curiosity of a boatman being excited by the phenomenon of a pair of half boots, sole upwards, beating a sort of devil's tattoo in the air, he rowed up to the mysterious object, and, having righted the unlucky bachelor, hauled him, more dead than alive, into his wherry.

Instead of seeking to know whether the rest of the party were saved, Pike's first inquiry, when he recovered his senses, related to the extent of his own loss, an investigation of which the result was by no means satisfactory. His watch had slipped from his fob into the mud, to be wound up, perchance, by some lucky ballast-dredger; and his ungrateful money, though

he loved it better that seized the sai Dreading the furth evitably be entailed be put to bed at the conveyed, he barg man to carry him in the notion that taken in by an extending apothecar.

In his anxiety reached by other reached himself. in his wet clothes illness, that he waweeks, and had to and medicines—seeing a launch, life-preserver.

We return to whose mind, whe the startling occurrences of the day, it would be utterly impossible to describe. At first, all was a bewildering and frightful chaos, a species of waking nightmare, in which every thing appeared horrible and revolting, but nothing true. It seemed too strange, too hideous, too impossible, to be real. But, as this wildering confusion passed away, and the actual events of the morning successively recurred to her, until the whole truth flashed with an electrical effect upon her memory, a whirlwind of conflicting emotions lacerated her mind, and convulsed her entire frame.

Inflamed, almost to momentary madness, by the feeling that she had been deceived, betrayed, and outraged—that a base conspiracy had been formed against her, in which the treacherous Hunter, and the still more perfidious Rose, were accomplices—that its unexpected detection, and the sudden breaking off of her marriage, on which she had instantly

to an informant exaspera comfort in the thought of vengezoe upon the culpi

vengezine upon the culpi.
This storm of passion of a quick temperament merited and intolerable sided. Her heart show assailants by which it he tortured: her better jufe-lings recovered their fell from before her eye not only to trace the culpit with a clear and undistituted, though full, justic friends whom she had sparingly condemned.

several minutes' continuance, at the conclusion of which her spirit softened into tenderness and truth; and the tears, which had hitherto been denied a vent, flowed unconsciously down her cheeks, as she exclaimed in a subdued and broken voice:

"I see it all—I see it all! They loved one another from the very first — what could be more natural, more excusable?— and their mutual estrangement was but an effort to conquer an unhappy passion, of which their deep and hopeless poverty forbade the indulgence. Hence the coldness, the struggles, the indecision of Hunter; hence the waning health, the deep despondency, and the morbid captiousness of Rose. Deluded, blind, besotted being that I was, not to see all this before! And now that my eyes are torn open, what thousands of glaring proofs spring up on every side! Not to me, as my fond vanity believed, not to me but to Rose did he direct his pas-

more large and English Longa See the 124 test 1242 10 1862 1215 210 in the hear, and pres man i fare jeen not : - 100 S. 88's 21. W analogi Hinna -th grad beide me r anab tarino Ani the mir part gri was doubtle to accept her love lon fasion and objections of plicable at the time, w Researched come and li well: 11 this is now cle

paths. Ob home

As Helen sate up in the bed, the unheeded tears still falling upon her clasped hands, the was for some time again lost in a deep and elent reverie, at the conclusion of which the resumed in a firmer tone of voice—

methinks I am now gifted with a keener penetration than usual, as some compensation for my past obtuseness; for, if I mistake not, I can dive into the hearts of Hunter and of Rose, and explain their every action. For the happiness of his mother, of his sister Harriet, and even of Rose herself, he resolved to conquer his inauspicious attachment, and to offer his hand to one who never—who never—"

A returning gush of feeling prevented the completion of the sentence, and she fell back upon the bed, sobbing and weeping like a child. Presently, however, she recovered sufficient composure to continue.

"And Rose, who had discovered the state of my affections, as, indeed, she often told me, magnanimously determined to sacribe herself, and to go forth into exile and bondage for the happiness of her friend. She was not wrong, when she so mournfully anticipated her early death, for I know how fragile is her hold of life, and I am now confident that the struggle would have been fatal to her. This must not and shall not be. Generous Hunter my sweet, my darling, my high-souled Rose ve were made for one another; and not upon my account, now that I have at length detecte your mutual devotement, not upon my account I solemnly swear, shall ye make misery as shipwreck of your whole future lives. Welld I foresee the extent of the martyrdom the awaits me; I must give up finally and for ev - yes, I must sever myself permanently fro Hunter, from Rose, from Mary Lomax. Su denly and violently must I be wrenched aw from all that I love; my bleeding heart must! torn up by the roots; but I shall, at all event we the consolation of knowing that I have ne my duty, and that, in this dreadful trial, I re acted in a manner worthy of myself, and the dear, dear friends from whom my hard e compels me to part for ever."

An opportunity was now presented for alizing the lofty aspirations of her bosom; id the thought how she should most becomgly take advantage of it, so as fully to meet r own benevolent wishes, and to convert : sneers or pretended compassion of the rld into a genuine admiration, supplied the y balm of which her lacerated feelings were the moment susceptible. To her own temary sufferings she became partially reconed by the conviction that they would secure manent felicity to Hunter, to his sister, and Rose. At all times, the practice of virtue is best solace for the afflicted; by bestowing ssings upon others, we entail them on ourves, a fact which was never more strikingly OL. III. ĸ

exemplified than in the present experience of Helen, who passed the while night, sleeplessly indeed, but not without complacency in a ranging the scheme of beneficence, and the plan of action, to which she had already madup her mind.

Horton, the female servant who had live with her since her girlish days, was an elderly widow, of acquirements much superior to be station, of an approved discretion, and do votedly attached to her young mistress, as we from gratitude for many favours, as from a lor experience of her perfect amiability. The person Helen summoned to her room in the morning, and desired her to procure a glacoach for their immediate conveyance into the City. In vain did the good woman enlar upon the imprudence of quitting the how on the day after her perilous immersion in the water.

Declaring, as was indeed true, that she

not suffer the smallest inconvenience from the accident, Helen peremptorily insisted upon being obeyed, and at an early hour proceeded accordingly to Mr. Bryant's stockbroker, who accompanied her to the Bank, where she transacted the business she had intended, and then returned to Eagle Wharf. How she was occupied during the remainder of that day, which was passed in the seclusion of her own room, will appear by the following letters:

## "My dear, dear Rose!

"Knowing the acute, the exquisite, sensibility of your feelings, and the delicate state of your frame, wasted as it has been by a withering concealment and blighted affections, I almost tremble to think of the effect which may have been produced upon you by the shock and the disclosures of yesterday. Let me begin, therefore, by the tranquillizing assurance that, after having discovered your secret, and obtained a perfect clue to every thing which

said adoration, are adder I wall the magnanimou were about to make for n " After this declaration essent to say that I pard have done; and yet sure nuces, that calls for forgi sig the purity of your i rus vour disinterestee menuship, has nearly p count wherein the life-le remans of both, must ess. O Rose! Rose! ki servely abdited by Mr. han not less tenderly in n and alderfee where we

object of his affections; how could you urge a marriage which might have been attended with not less cruel disappointment to my heart and hope than to your own? Yet why should I ask you?

"I know the exalted quality of your mind, the intense ardour of your friendship, and that knowledge solves every difficulty. Were you to inquire of me how I became so inconceivably blinded as not to perceive the real state of your affections, I should be utterly unable to furnish you a reply. These questions, however, need not now be mooted. Enough to know that we have all stood upon the edge of a precipice, and that we should all most devoutly thank Heaven, as I do from the very bottom of my soul, for enabling us to discover the danger before we were precipitated into the abyss.

"Let us not look to the past, which offers so little on which we could wish to dwell, but to the future, where happier days, as I trust

marriage with Mr. Hunte solved for ever; I have i from all his engagements, you are to fill the place w pied.

"Methinks I see your you reach this passage of advanced nothing that is rally true. Henceforth you you are his betrothed, hi the presence of other with did he passionately addre of his soul; in the same him your dear Mr. Hunt into his arms. Not to

complishment of a marriage which would doubtless have occurred at an earlier period, had it not been prevented by one insuperable impediment.

"That obstacle is now removed. I have this morning transferred into your name a sum, which, by securing to you a moderate independence, while it will not raise you and your future husband above the motives to future exertion, will place you, according to my notions, in the most enviable situation that society affords. In the false position lately occupied by Mr. Hunter, his great and varied talents were rather a bane than an advantage to him. Be it your care, dear Rose, by directing them into a more honourable and appropriate channel, to realize your own prognostications, when you so strenuously maintained that all his infirmities, whether of temper or of conduct, were the sole result of the uncongenial element to which he was condemned.

ing myself. Scruple ne may, do not even imagin xxy particular obligati employ a porti than in securing the ha whom on earth I most e plish its object, and I Mire, much more, than self. My fortune prov anticipated. I am mode you have often heard beyand competency is ca the saying of the wise which we used to read a natural wealth; luxurio novertv.

England. Where I shall ultimately settle, I have not yet decided; but, whithersoever I may wander, I shall be accompanied by the faithful Horton, who is fully competent to discharge the double functions of my protectress and my companion.

away so rudely from you, from Mary Lomax, and from others whom I tenderly regard, I will not affect to deny; but my spirits, as you have sometimes experienced to your cost, are buoyant almost to exuberance, and I felt this morning, while signing my name at the Bank, a lightness and elasticity of heart, which I accepted as an augury of the happiness I hope permanently to enjoy, when I shall have had time to recover from the shock of recent occurrences.

"The hardest, the most cruel, the most heart-rending word of all remains to be written. We must part, dear, dear Rose, part to meet

In the necessity of this decision, von will instantly acquiesce, since you, yourself, when our respective positions with reference to Mr. Hunter were exactly reversely found vourself imperatively bound to adopt a similar course. Grant me but one favour, the only one I shall ever ask at your hands. Seek not, in any respect to after my resolves; they have been deeply considered; they are immutable. Seek not to pry into the place of my retreat; let us have the fortitude to begin where we must finish, by accustoming ourselve to an absolute and total separation. Heresler I may, perhaps, write to you, but, even upon this point. I am undetermined. As yet I have had no time to reflect, or to arrange my ulterior plans. It will be my study to do whatere may seem best for our mutual happiness and peace of mind.

"For both our sakes, I have torn myself away without the keen and unnecessary pane of a parting interview. With my pen, therefore, my sweetest of sweet friends! my dear little Mimosa! my darling Rose de Meaux! (Oh! how delightful is it to call you once more by those endearing nick-names of our girlish days!) with my pen must I bid you adieu, and ejaculate Bless you, bless you, bless you a thousand times! That you may be quickly restored to health, and to the enjoyment of enduring felicity with the chosen of your affections, will be the constant prayer of your ever fond and affectionate, though ever separated friend,

"Helen Owen."

Under the influence of highly-excited feelings, which, in writing to one who possessed her entire confidence, she dreamt not of qualifying in the expression, this letter had been dashed off without a pause or hesitation. That to Hunter, of which we subjoin a copy, though

shorter, was composed with greater difficulty, not see already experienced the reserve inspired as not not addressing her intended husband, but one victor see was henceforth to consider as a communitive stranger.

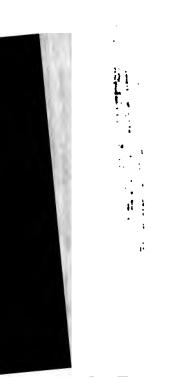
## " My DEAR FRIEND!

For sach I will still call you, though any source and more tender appellation must for you be abandened, let us congratulate one accurer on our providential escape, not only to in the waters in which we were immersely that from an inanspicious union which might have consider irremediable misery upon our and upon another whom we both love will better than ourselves. Ceaseless be our thanks to Heaven for this double research

was by your side yesterday, and heard

Rose, when you hung over her in the boat. That agonizing moment drew up the curtain of the past, and revealed to me all the stages of a mutual passion, my blindness to which seems to me at present little less than a miracle. The secret which had been so honourably locked up in your respective hearts, is divulged to each other, to me, to the world. You are fondly enamoured of Rose, she has bestowed her entire heart upon you.

"You will be naturally distressed, perhaps terrified, at the thought of the pain and humiliation which this discovery must have occasioned me; and I hasten, therefore, to relieve your apprehensions. Freely do I confess that for a moment my woman's pride was shocked beyond endurance, my self-love unspeakably wounded, my heart tortured to its very core. For a brief space, I believe I was actually mad; but the soul-convulsing spasm passed rapidly away, my vision was cleared in the struggle,



for putting a double tions by avoiding a seeking it with me. for this meditated say you would have stridischarged the vows needless to add that you for all the pain tionally have occasion from every engageme how completely I of in return, when I appear peruse this let London, never to reagain!

" But I do not rele

Concly let her shattered health and deep melancholy attest. Your long-continued uncious courtship has been eloquent in its lince, and, though passive, it has penetrated leeply into your hearts. What need, then, of leay?

"The poverty of Rose no longer presents a barrier to your union. She now possesses a competency, which, though moderate, will enable you to marry her without imprudence; and it cannot, surely, be difficult to enlarge your income, when you give a proper direction to the great abilities with which you are gifted. May I be allowed to suggest that no sphere seems to me more appropriate to your talents and feelings, while none can be more delightful and independent, than the field of literature?

"Indulge me with a few more words about our dear Rose. You do not, you cannot, know her half so well as I do. This gifted creature requires a delicacy of treatment, proportioned to the acuteness of her intellect and feelings. She has no parents, no relations; her oldest friend will be far, far away; she will have nobody in the wide world on whom to depend but yourself. You will possess all her thoughts, all her affections, her whole undivided heart, and oh, what a heart! Should you prove unworthy of this most precious charge, she will not long survive so withering a blight of all her hopes. Should you fondly reciprocate her love, oh how ineffable will be your mutual felicity!

"In calling upon God to bless your approaching union, I adjure you to recollect the alternative that is placed before you, and to pursue the right path. You will do so; I know, I feel that you will, for the sake of Rose, of yourself, and of her who, whither soever she may be borne by the severing tide of fate, can never, never forget those whom

she never more shall see, nor ever cease to subscribe herself Mr. Hunter's

"Sincere well-wisher and friend,
"HELEN OWEN."

Her letter to Hunter's sister was short, but not less honourable to her high and generous feelings than the foregoing. It ran as follows.

## "MY DEAR HARRIST,

"Circumstances, which I need not detail, for you will quickly be apprized of them by others," have suddenly though amicably dissevered my marriage contract with your brother. We part to meet no more. But your nuptials, thank Heaven! need not for a moment be interrupted. I am well aware that Mr. Holloway's friends only consented to the match in the belief that Alfred would soon be enabled to replace your portion. It had always been my intention to realize his wishes, and the enclosed receipt for stock transferred into your

smalest indifferentiable to Family 2. May 300

number the year deserments the year and a more Present my admiss and a pure and responsibilities, to your excellent mother; near Harrett when I assisted.

en may never meet again. — maly and ad

the more saragile reconcilists letters. She had friend Many Loman, to moures of her conduct.

While she had been devising her plans during the past sleepless night, while she had been carrying them into effect at the Bank, and subsequently writing to her friends, her mind had been kept in a state of tension, which gave her a temporary support. But, when this strong excitement failed, her overwrought spirit sank into exhaustion, she felt utterly unnerved and unstrung, and the tears again flowed from her eyes, without her possessing the power, or even the wish, to restrain them.

Recoiling from the idea of exposing her weakness to Mary, she contented herself with penning a few lines, containing a promise of full and unreserved explanations when she should have reached the end of her journey. A short letter, with a similar declaration, was also written to Mr. and Mrs. Bryant.

Soon after daylight on the following morning, Helen, accompanied by Horton, was posting



## CHAPTER V.

"Oh! 'tis not, Hinda, in the power
Of Fancy's most terrific touch
To paint thy pangs in that dread hour—
Thy silent agony—'t was such
As those who feel can paint too well,
But none e'er felt, and lived to tell!"

Moore.

RS. LOMAX lived so perpetually in the ence of her beloved son, in whom all her aly hopes were concentrated, that his gray declining health was less perceptible to elf than to others. Like Helen Owen, she destined to experience that there is nothing inding as our wishes; she knew, she felt, her whole happiness depended upon his very; and the very thought of a disappoint-

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ment was so withering to her heart, so utterly intolerable, that she drove it from her with loathing and abhorrence.

A doting mother is ever sanguine; and many circumstances combined to feed the expecta tions of Mrs. Lomax, which were never des tined to be realized. The treacherous natur of her son's complaint, for he was now in th last stage of a rapid decline, was more espe cially calculated to delude her into the belie that he was rather recovering from his diseas than sinking under it. The hectic flush, the insidious banner which death plants upon th cheek of his intended victim, to mark him s his own; the glary brilliancy of the eye, t expiring gleam of a sun that is about to set the darkness of night; the preternatural acut ness of the intellect, a proof that the spirit prematurely developing itself, until it ! "o'er-informed its tenement of clay;" these symptoms of disease were to the fo parent incontestable evidences of convalescence.

A medical pretender, whose confident predictions of effecting a cure had induced her to employ him, and whose total ignorance of the complaint, or sordid determination to keep so profitable a patient in his hands, prompted him to maintain his bold assertions, helped to confirm her in her delusion.

But that which most effectually lulled her apprehensions was the demeanour of Benjamin himself, who, although his weakness increased, was totally free from suffering of any sort, while his spirits were never depressed. In this latter circumstance, however, the filial affection of the youth had contributed to deceive her. Without imagining himself to be in any imminent danger, a secret presentiment, and those undefinable sensations which can only be felt, not described, awoke occasional misgiving as to his ultimate recovery. Of death he had

me fear whatever: but, the thought of leaving his parents and his sister so far overcame his gentle and leving heart, that, when left alone, which was but for brief intervals, he would so netimes sink into despondency, and shed involuntary tears.

Conscirus however, that his mother's happiness, if not her existence, was wrapped up in his own, he would not for the world have suffered her to witness his dejection. Whenever his quick ear caught the sound of her approach, he hastily washed his eyes, received her with his wonted smile, sweet as that of an angel, and, in order to gladden her soul with allusions to his recovery, talked cheerfully of different excursions which he had projected when his amended health should allow him to travel.

Wishing, upon one occasion, to confirm the impression of his returning strength, by walking for some time up and down the room, his debilitated frame sank under the effort, and he fell into a fainting fit of such long continuance, that his agonized mother, imagining him to be dead, sate by his side in a stupor of transfixed horror, which was succeeded by a delirium of joy, when animation returned, and he once more opened his pearly, dove-like eyes.

As distrustful now as she had previously been sanguine, she sent instantly for the most eminent practitioner in London, who, after having minutely examined all the symptoms of his patient, and conversed with him for some time, took Mrs. Lomax aside, and, feelingly deploring the painful duty he was called upon to discharge, gradually broke to her the intelligence that her son was in a rapid consumption, which might allow him to live for some weeks, but from which he saw no chance whatever of ultimate recovery.

"What!" exclaimed the horror-stricken parent, clasping her hands together, and VOL. III.

"While there is life, n hope: but, in this instantremely slight, that I m

to be prepared for a fatal "Never - never! I prepared for my dear be Mrs. Lomax: and, throu knees, while she raised she passionately exclain for God's sake, save hir shall have half our forti I will give you every t only do not-for pity's my Benjamin, my only upon earth-must die!" shall be unremitting. Never have I seen a youth who appeared to me so perfectly seraphic, both in beauty and disposition; never have I seen a patient who in one single interview has awakened so powerful an interest in my heart. I will attend him as if he were my own child; you must second my skill and exertions by becoming his nurse; and, in order that you may effectually discharge the duties of that office, allow me to tell you that you must begin by moderating, nay, by totally suppressing, these transports of unavailing grief."

"I am calm—composed—serene," cried the mother, crushing down her violent grief by a sort of convulsive effort:—"I will be his slave by night and by day. Neither sleep nor refreshment shall I need while I am thus watching over him. Only give me instructions, and see how submissive, how abject, I will become!

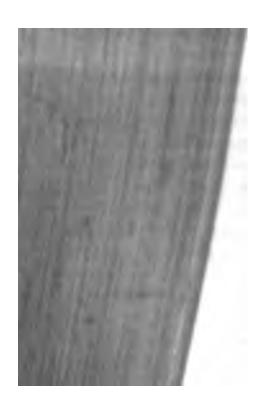
What am I to do? How am I to act? Tell me, only tell me.

"Let me entreat you once more to govern your impatience. Your dear boy, our dear boy, our dear boy, as I may most truly term him, must not be flurried or agitated, still less must be be distressed by witnessing the grief of a parent with whose impassioned affection he cannot fail to sympathize. You must carefully conceal your anxiety; this is my first and most earnest injunction. Such other directions as may appear expedient, I will write down for your guidance."

From this hour, Mrs. Lomax became the nurse, companion, and comforter of the invalid, whose room she hardly ever quitted, administering all his medicines with her own hand, supplying every want, and anticipating every wish, with the tenderness, solicitude, and forethought, which none but a fond mother can feel and exercise.

And thus passed several weeks, during which there was an incessant though secret contest of love between the parent and the son, the latter fearing to make any allusion to his death, which he now felt to be surely approaching, from fear of distressing his mother, and ever wearing an affectionate smile in her presence, while his heart was sinking within him at the thought of their coming separation, and of the dark despair into which his decease might plunge her. She, on the other hand, though she marked with an indescribable anguish a daily change, which too visibly confirmed the prognostications of the physician, quelled the throbbing agony that almost threatened to burst her bosom, and subdued her features to a composure, which she could sometimes even wrench into a smile.

During this auxious interval, the day arrived which had been fixed for the triple nuptials. Those of Helen and Hunter were never to be



the ecca whose sitely: to her a sad as mony tal lended.

her engagement, in point of time, that he instantly assented to the deferment of his happiness, until the fate of Benjamin should have been decided.

None of these imperative grounds for delay applied to the union of Harriet and Holloway, the latter of whom, having obtained a temporary leave of absence from business, for his wedding excursion, had travelled up to London to claim his bride. 'That marriage was, therefore, solemnized on the appointed day. Neither the circumstances nor the wishes of the parties calling for any parade on the occasion, we have little to record, save that the bustling and kind-hearted Mrs. Hunter, disappointed as she was that her son's intended union with Helen had been so unexpectedly marred, seemed at the wedding of Harriet to be half crazy with joy; while her grief and her tears were equally uncontrollable, when she was obliged to bid her daughter adieu.

An invitation, however, to visit the newly married couple, on their return home, and t anticipation of being thus enabled to run or to Monkwell, and explore the scenes of h past happiness, so rapidly restored her equal mity, that she exclaimed with a simperi complacency, as the post-chaise bore them for ner door:-" Joy go with you? joy go w you! What a nice chaise, and what capi horses! Well, I do think they are the pretti pair I ever saw-that is, Harriet and Hollow La! there's one of them kicking! That's rig postboy, flog them well: I hope they're vicious; but do n't hurt them, poor creatures the horses, I mean. God bless them, and gr that they may be comforts and companion me in my old age, and sit by my bed-s and close my eyes when I die. La! only think of my seeing dear Monkwell again! the grave where my poor husband lies buri Ah! I shall never, never forget the throb t

my heart gave, when they first began to toll the bell at his funeral. Why, there's the muffin-man's bell, I do declare, and not yet six o'clock! Where's Sally? We ought to make merry on dear Harriet's wedding-day, and so we'll have some muffins for tea."

Without any material alteration in the symptoms, Benjamin continued to sink under a painless and gradual declension. The invalid himself was the first to make allusion to a subject which had long engrossed the attention of all, but which all had feared to broach. Conscious that his death was now rapidly approaching, and, dreading the effect it might produce upon his friends, and more especially upon his mother, should she be unprepared for the blow, he determined to communicate to her the certainty of the coming event, and, if possible, to reconcile her to it by anticipation.

Taking, therefore, and tenderly pressing the hand of either parent in his own, as they sate

and dulcet than ever :-Mary! The fear of dis duced me to lock up a which ought, perhaps, to vealed. The time is con longer silent, lest my l for ever; and, if I give only that you may be the after. Bear my tidings v as I impart them, and de plore you, do not lacera display of an unavailing that I must shortly die ! the hand of death upon " leve, no skill, can sa are numbered. Soon, I we must part for ever; 

be as perfectly resigned to this painful severance as —— as I am."

His voice, which had been previously firm, though soft and low, trembled a little at these last words, and he paused as if to recover and collect himself. Long as they must have been prepared for the event thus announced, the countenances of his auditors betrayed a mixture of surprise and embarrassment, with the deepest mental anguish; but his emphatic adjuration prevented any ebullition, and they compelled themselves to silence.

Mary, though not less deeply affected than her parents, retained much more command over her feelings, quelling, as well as she could, every manifestation that might distress her brother. At first, she was afraid to trust her voice, but, having in some degree recovered her firmness, she returned the beaming smile of the invalid, and exclaimed, with an assumed calmness: "Dearest Benjamin! let us hope that you may be

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Let us hope that our the undoubted and shall physician, may st blessing to us all."

Berjamin shook h smile. "Well, then," resur stil, a hope, still a hear

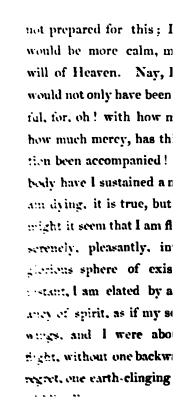
S Our separation, he was short one. We no more—we shall mee

no more—we shall mee ness and sorrow are un "Ay, ay," joyfully e

tarning his celestial countenance became i ferrour. "That, indee

we shall meet in heaver Mrs. Lower exchanged a rapid but significant and agonising look with her husband. Abashed, heartstricken, appalled, the guilty pair instantly read
esch other's thoughts. They had no chance of
heaven; outcasts and reprobates, they were cut
of, by their unrepented and unatoned crime,
from all the promises of divine favour; instead
of sharing the hopes of their son, their souls
were darkened with despair. When once he
was withdrawn from their embraces, never,
never should they again behold their darling
Benjamin.

As these promptings of remorse rushed across the mind of Lomax, he groaned deeply, turned his wandering, haggard, eyes towards the door, and walked out of the room with a look of anguish and dismay. Mary immediately followed him, for she saw by his disturbed mood that he was not fit to be trusted alone; while the partner of his guilt, as if apprehensive that her countenance might betray what



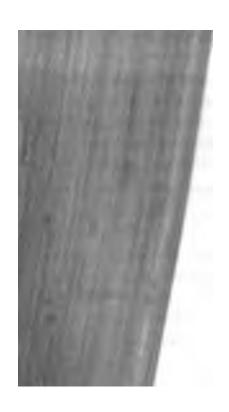
"May God forgive me if I am wrong," said the afflicted mother, resuming some degree of composure; "but methinks there is an aggravation mingled with the very solace to which you have made allusion. Suffering, and sorrow, the waning frame and the ravages of age, reconcile us to a separation even from the dearest objects of our love, by converting the dart of death into a welcome instrument of release. But, to lose you thus, dear Benjamin, in all the bloom of youthand beauty, to have you snatched away just as you are rising up into a manhood which would have been the comfort, the honour, the glory, of our old age—this, this indeed is hard to bear! It is as if my heart were to be suddenly torn up by the roots, and wrenched from out my bosom."

"And yet who shall say, dear mother, that this decree of Providence may not be a blessing? I know that we are all fallible creatures, liable to temptation; and, had I lived, I might, perhaps, by falling into some deadly sin, have been a disgrace and a curse to you in your old age, instead of a comfort and an honour."

"Never, dear Benjamin, never! It is not in your nature. You would only have lived to shed a richer glory and happiness over our house. But this delight, this earthly redemption to our souls, is to be denied us. Besotted that we were to expect it! Had we but looked at you, but listened to you, we ought not to have dreamed of any such beatitude. No; you are too good, too beautiful, to remain long among us. In form, face, mind, every thing, you are a ready-made seraph, and Heaven is but reclaiming its own. With such a glorious destiny before you, well may you rejoice to quit this melancholy world."

"I do not rejoice to quit it, dear mother, although I am perfectly resigned to my fate; nor can I by any means deem this cheerful and beautiful earth a melancholy world. What a beneficent miracle is it to be called out of the blank darkness of nothing, to be formed in God's own image; to be placed in this sunlighted and sky-roofed palace, to be endowed with faculties and perceptions that qualify us for the enjoyment of the most exquisite delights, both sensual and intellectual; and, above all, to inherit the hopes of future immortality in a higher and more glorious state of being! Oh! what sublime, what soulexalting privileges are these! Who, then, shall call this a melancholy world?"

"They who have dashed from the hand of the Deity his proffered cup of happiness and salvation!" groaned Mrs. Lomax, in a voice of solemn anguish. "The guilty, though undetected, wretches, who have secretly violated the laws of God and man; the weak and wicked creatures who, like Esau, have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. Oh horrible! most horrible!"



Comp her head

speak.

Rapt, cate

mingling with her attention, as if she were listening to the music of a newly-descended messenger from Heaven. Thus did she remain, until her youthful monitor, exhausted by the effort he had made, again kissed her, and, beseeching her to remember what he had said, begged she would leave him for the present, that he might refresh himself by sleep.

This injunction was obeyed; but, when his unhappy mother no longer felt the magic influence of his voice, the storm of sorrow, which it had lulled not quelled, again began to agitate her bosom. Nay, the very display of affection and talent which, for the moment, had consoled her, served now to aggravate her grief, for she could not bear the thought that so gifted a creature, the rose, as it were, of the whole world, should be thus prematurely cut off in the bud. For some time past, she had never dared to pray, for without penitence and atonement, she felt that to implore a blessing on her

scraples of a declenes, in tents she that wonerself to passionately implied that be taken instead of her bel

In this, as in every thin the impulse of violent and The thought that her pet be granted spothed, in so gaish; an I, when the nigshe at length sunk to sleeiterating her proyer.

## CHAPTER VI.

"Here comes the sad denouncer of my fate,
To toll the mournful knell of separation."

DRYDEN.

INSTIGATED by a misdirected zeal, Mrs. Skinner now regularly besieged Cypress House, intruding herself unceremoniously and at the most unseasonable hours, in the hope of being enabled to pour her "leprous distilment" into the ear of the dying Benjamin. But his vigilant mother, too acute to be deceived, too resolute to be intimidated, and entertaining, moreover, no very high opinion of her visitor's discretion, when her fiery fervour was once kindled, pleaded the physician's injunctions that his patient should



without spiritual consolat that he might have a Grimsby, a friend of he Gospel, and a person no strenuous eloquence, that his doctrine and the hoas was Mrs. Skinner to were beyond the pale of she was not less prone were within it; either fas it may be more chaignorance of his real chamuch more favourably deserved.

Bankrupt in charac Grimsby had travelled so easily get into any society as by passing through the door of the tabernacle, he joined a brotherhood of ultra-Calvinists. Assuming a most sanctimonious demeanour, and being gifted with a natural and ready eloquence, he presently began to expound to a few select hearers, and, enlarging his views with the number of his auditors, eventually set up for a Gospel minister, and found little difficulty in being enrolled as an itinerant preacher. In this new vocation, which was at first rendered successful by the severity of his doctrine and the fluency of his tongue, it became more than ever necessary to be circumspect and decorous in his way of life; although, as it will be seen in the sequel, he was in reality not less unprincipled than ever.

Let it not be imagined, even for an instant, that we offer this hypocrite as a sample of the sect to which he belonged, and which we have not the remotest intention to disparage. Sincerity and virtue, however widely we may

toleration, that we would most intolerant; nor ca be injured, by stating a clothing sometimes deceive appointed watchmen, and

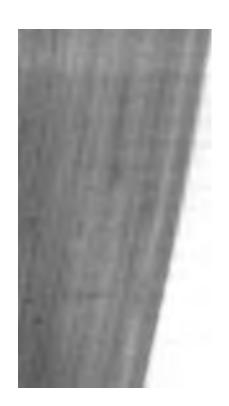
appointed watchmen, and
Notwithstanding Mrs. 5
mendations, Mrs. Lomax v
by to see her sick son unti
physician, who was so ar
in his attendance, that he
rather as the affectionat
medical adviser of the fam
"Grimsby!" he exclain
and shaking his head, "
man before, and have seen

produced upon one of my j denunciations, that I will i

what need has our dear Benjamin, what need has this youthful saint of any ghostly comforter, (a title, by the bye, which is totally inapplicable to Mr. Grimsby) when we all know by our own daily experience that he so little requires religious solace in his own person, as to be able to impart it, most sweetly and beneficially, to others. Why should we presumptuously attempt to teach our teacher? Conversant as I am with such scenes, never, never have I seen the beauty of holiness so touchingly, so convincingly, exemplified."

"I always said he was an angel," sighed the mother; "but Mrs. Skinner has doubts of his acceptance, because he has experienced no ecstasies, seen no visions of coming glory, tasted no antepast of the promised beatitudes."

"So much the better; I distrust these spurious raptures, knowing that they are often succeeded by despair and mental horrors that border upon phrensy. In our dear Benjamin we behold no



 announcement of his name, he intruded himself.

The countenances of its occupants, when he had briefly and without apology proclaimed his errand, presented a variety sufficiently marked to deserve a passing notice. Grimsby was a middle-aged man of a sallow, sodden complexion, a stern, forbidding, callous aspect, "a villanous low forehead," and a shock of bristly black hair, thatching a large mis-shapen head. Opposite to him, gracefully reclined the young, the fair, the golden-locked Benjamin, his azure eyes benignantly beaming as he gazed with a smile of welcome on the stranger. Very different was the expression of his mother, her fine features, always characteristic of energy and decision, being now knit and darkened into a most significant frown of suppressed indignation. Her husband, whose face had become blotched and bloated by habitual intemperance, had only partly recovered from the first alarm occasioned

room, or watched the do sion of some lurking to the bed sate Mary, pal tionate regards now fixed and now turned appeal if to deprecate any proturb the bland serenity of the sound in the stand serenity of the standard series and serenity of the standard series and series and series are standard series are series and series are standard series

Not perceiving, or not treaty, Grimsby immedia the youth as to his havi supernatural and ecstafavour and acceptance termed an experience. he had not received any manifestation; though he reliance on the mercy

perfectly at ease in his n

him into hopeless perdition and everlasting torment!

"I am but an inexperienced youth, and it becomes me not to argue with you, even if I were able," meekly replied Benjamin, the liquid suavity of whose voice, after the loud dissonance of his catechist, fell like softest music on the ear. "From this blessed book," he continued, laying his hand upon the Bible, "it were not difficult, I think, to show that you are in error, might I, without presumption, enter into theological controversy with a minister of the Gospel. But there is another comforter in the room, whose whisperings, audible to me, though not, perhaps, to you, I may in all humility venture to repeat. Mary, give me yonder flower-pot from the Look, Mr. Grimsby, at this rose; it table. has expanded and blown before my eyes, this very morning, while I have been watching and meditating upon the miracle of its birth. It fills me with reverence, I had almost said with awe, for

to me it seems Creator's han earth. I cant mary-alighte Its breath so gently move t thinks I hear - w the w adorned and, d. exquisite. collum ami : Noon hath it their odours the night on the casually without a cl what purpos levely by the delectation o Thinkest tho the same Fat

thus so careful to lavish upon them even superfluous graces and enjoyments, during their evanescent existence in this world, can find delight in condemning them to torture and despair in that which is to last for ever? When thou hearest a mistaken fellow-creature thus attempting to dethrone the all-loving, all-bountiful, allmerciful Creator, and to set up a demon in his place, point to the flowers, point to a rose, and say, Even were there no Bible, this should be my refutation of your doctrine, this my hope and trust, this my assurance of goodness and of mercy, this my defence of the calumniated Deity!"

With looks of the utmost horror, the exasperated fanatic began to pour forth a fresh torrent of denunciation against all who could entertain such pernicious notions, when Mrs. Lomax, leading or rather dragging him out of the room, exclaimed, as she shut the door behind her, "Go, sir, leave my house, and return

the dove, or the tiger again to visit my angel: " I forgive your rude your infatuation," said he had allowed his irrit him too far, and ender indignation he had exc charging a solemn but execution of which I ne ceremonics of life to in that neither you nor you a soul-involving delusio you may not have loved for his own eternal ha Much, much do I fear the Giver in the gift, the and have thus converte wards heavenly comforts, by leaving you without a single solace upon earth. Should this prediction be verified, I will visit you in your trouble, assist you with my counsel, and endeavour to guide you Zionward. In the mean time, peace be with you."

These words, spoken in an oracular tone, and rendered significant by the secret presentiments of her own heart, made more impression upon Mrs. Lomax than she chose to confess, even to herself. At a subsequent period they frequently recurred to her, and led to results of the most distressing and fatal nature.

"I hope you have dismissed our visitor gently and with due acknowledgments," said her son, when she returned to his apartment. "His intentions are doubtless good, and I am most thankful for his kindness, though I cannot coincide in his views. Good motives may well reconcile us to an erroneous opinion, if such, indeed, it be, for which of us, fallible and



with at product gan appearable or sympt an needernal limbo suchi y inconveni ne stead of being overel ezd, his intellect ber clear, and his mook was earthly about I scintualising, in [ change. As the s descries the land ere rades, and announc as the young lark. covers the vet unt the tidings to the co gladness: so did t

favoured youth cate

countenance, so illuminated his mind, so cheered and exalted his heart, that they who gazed upon his surpassing beauty, and heard the holy effusions that fell in music from his lips, felt their love and admiration solemnized by a thrilling awe, as if they stood in the presence of a superior nature, and were listening to a revelation from the world of spirits.

It was evening, and, as Benjamin reclined upon his bed surrounded by his family, and soothing their sorrows into reverence and resignation by such discourse as we have been describing, he desired that the window might be thrown open, for the weather was sultry, and he thought the air might relieve him. The beams of the setting sun, reflected by a crimson cloud, threw a flush of light into the room, that imparted a glow of seeming health to the sick youth, who drew himself a little higher up on the pillow, and gazed, out, through his favourite flowers in the window, upon the animated river, and the

apartment, filling it wit roses over which it p boughs and the song of l garden; and a musical been purchased by Mrs. tion of the invalid, fille tinklings, with Luther's which he found partic associations with which it "How pleasant, how exclaimed, when the musi behold the setting sun, and the variegated earth, a and to catch the busy hun so near as to disturb the tinct enough to awaken all of the heart! Mine is e

as if it were yearning, more ardently than ever, for that glorious heaven which is looking so benignantly down upon me. I feel that my days, my hours, are rapidly drawing to a close, and oh! how thankful should I be if I might pass away now, even now, cheered by the light, and fanned by the airs of heaven, surrounded with sweet odours, and music, and beauty, and closing my eyes amid the lovebeaming looks of all those who are dear to me upon earth, in the blessed hope of again meeting them in heaven."

He paused, but his rapt companions made no reply, for they derived a mournful solace from his discourse, and invited him by their silence to resume it. He did so, after a while, exclaiming, in a weaker voice, "I am very, very happy; I am wonderfully sustained, as if by an invisible hand drawing me heavenward. Ah! if my wish could at this instant be realised, how truly might I exclaim, 'O death! where

l le ille sykine

mother gently closed the window, hushingly whispered her husband and Mary to withdraw, and seated herself at the foot of the bed, brooding over him with a solicitude so fond that she feared to move, and almost to breathe, lest she should awaken him. The setting sun, chequered by the flowers in the window, fell upon his waxen features, and flickered amid his golden locks, until, as she gazed intently upon him, she fancied his head to be surrounded by a divine halo, and mentally ejaculated, "Assuredly this is no son of mine, no mortal youth, but a seraph whom Heaven has vouchsafed to send down awhile upon the earth, and now, alas! is preparing to reclaim. Instead of repining, should this unmerited boon be withdrawn from me, I should rather be grateful that I have been suffered to enjoy it so long. And yet to part—to part for ever! I cannot, cannot reconcile my mind to a thought so withering, so agonising."

and the gravering for we say we have a more than the warm to be said and the warm to be said and the said and said and the said and the said the sa

ion the night had set if

alumber. To prevent his being disturbed by the entrance of servants, she had given orders that candles should always be left on a slab outside, so as to be ready when wanted. Cautiously opening the door, and stealing out on tiptoe, she brought them in, and deposited them at the further end of the room, casting a look at the supposed sleeper, as she returned to her seat. His attitude remained precisely the same, but his eyes were not quite closed, and there was an indescribable something in his aspect which suddenly electrified her with a suspicion of the dreadful truth.

Starting to his side, she thrice ejaculated his name, beginning with a hoarse whisper, and rising into an impatient cry. All was motion-less, all was silent! Agonised by this confirmation of her fears, she snatched up his outstretched hand. It was cold as marble; and, as she flung it from her, with an irrepressible shudder, it fell rattling upon the little table by

and of a sound to reheme the same to the sound of the same to the dispensed. At the hopes and as she recorded from a shriek of the long bereit mother. I take if through the whole hour "He is dead! he she reiterated, with a despair. "O God! will

and my brain, my bra denly clasping her he throbs, it whirls, it i mad!"

my heart! It is broke

For a brief space, she bitterly brooding over

every instant appeared to her distempered mind more cruel, more outrageous, more intolerable. Although her son had been given over by the physicians, and had himself repeatedly announced to her his approaching death, she had so clung to the belief of his recovery, so hoped in the midst of hopelessness, that she was quite unprepared for the blow when at length it fell upon her.

The natural violence of her disposition, restrained and pent up during her long attendance in the sick chamber, now burst forth with an accumulated and ungovernable fury. She gnashed her teeth, and, glaring wildly around the room, with the look of an enraged lioness whose young one has been shot by the hunter, exclaimed, in accents of almost frantic desperation, "So, then! I am standing in the presence of the grisly tyrant, of the grim destroyer—Death! He is here in this very room, triumphing over his victim, preparing to feast upon his



damned flend, come for let me clutch thee; I challenge thee to the unarmed, a woman; I mother, and I feel strointo ten thouands pieces heart!

..... .... ..... uis may.

Overcome by this ravin ed woman sank uncon whence, however, she exclaimed, "Benjamin chim—I too will die—we world shall die." The upon the floor, she contone, "Oh that I could catoms with my heel, and and consign the whole than hight!"

The vehemence of her gesticulations, the loudness of her voice, and the terrible distortion of her inflamed features, presented, at this moment, an appalling contrast to the fixed immobility, the placid pale face, and the never-to-be-hroken silence of the deceased youth, over whose unchanged beauty death had not yet exercised the smallest dominion.

Lomax, who had caught the sound of her passionate exclamations, now entered the room, and seemed to produce a change in her feelings, for she pointed to the dead body with an apparent calmness, and said, in a hoarse, composed voice, "All is over — Benjamin is dead!"

"Poor fellow! poor fellow!" exclaimed the father, who had been quite prepared for the catastrophe. "God's will be done! he died without pain or sorrow, and we have discharged our duty as parents up to the last. This will always be a consolation to us."



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none—none—none."

Alarmed by the fixe of iron to her features

her from the sight of scarcely knew how to in a scothing voice, " not deny that this disp fully tempered with a patiently to the decreus quit this chamber of supper-time."

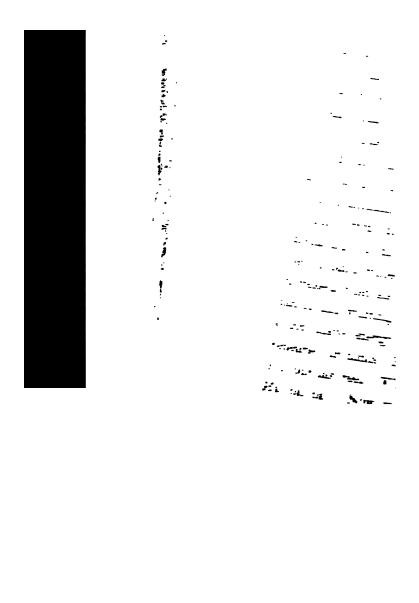
"You are right, you starting from her prof aitered air, "let us qu ing apartment. Let u

he mains on this his

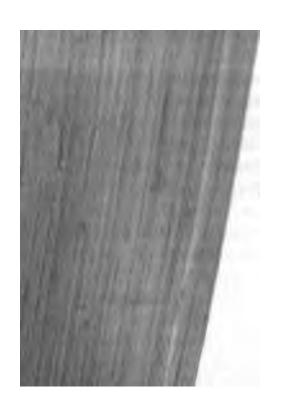
raph son. Pah! it is an abomination to my sight—a heap of carrion and corruption. Away! away!"

As she spoke thus, her eyes and countenance flared with a wild animation, she ran to her husband, seized his arm, and hurried him down stairs, rapidly exclaiming—"Did you not say it was supper-time? Ha! ha! ha! Well! why not? Let us carouse and sing, and drive away thought; for thought will madden us. It was no fool who said, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.' To-morrow? There will be no to-morrow for Benjamin; he died to-day, and we will forget him before the night is out. Ay, and forget ourselves, too, which is better still. Ha, ha, ha!"

Having by this time entered the dining-room, where the table was laid for supper, always an important meal with the luxurious Lomax, she filled a tumbler with wine, emptied it at a draught, and continued, with a look and voice



Nature could hold out no longer. To the aspeakable relief of the husband, who was alf dead with terror, his distracted wife reased her grasp and fell upon the floor, writhing, shricking, and laughing in the most appalling systerics.



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if she had received the tidings of her friend's sudden death, superseded for the moment every other feeling in the bosom of the sensitive Rose, who, when she recollected what she owed to her for all her past favours, for the noble munificence communicated in her present letter, and the sacrifices of all sorts involved in her perpetual self-banishment from London, sunk under a weight of obligation that almost crushed her heart. Upbraiding herself with the blackest ingratitude towards her benefactress, she gave way to an agony of remorse, which, in conjunction with the illness produced by her immersion in the river, confined her for several days to her bed, and threatened for the moment to disturb her senses.

Gradually, however, her mental vision became less distorted, and she was relieved from much of her suffering and agitation by being enabled to view recent occurrences in their true light. Why should she thus bitterly accuse

and unexpected result Imprudent she might Ler affections upon H up the secret in her inviolate, until it had bination of circumstano control; besides, s if not gladly, at least same sacrifice of love ship, in which she ha by the generous Helei These consideration immediate distress, b consolable for the los overcome by the ma while the painful awk in which she was p Hunter filled her with

which the dawnings o

arise from recent occurrences, had not yet begun to penetrate.

Nor were Hunter's feelings, in the first instance, much more enviable than those of his mistress, for such is the term that we must now apply to Rose. He, too, accused himself of the most unfeeling demeanour towards Helen at the time of the accident, although his offence was involuntary; he too was stung with a sense of ingratitude, especially when he adverted to the contents of her letter; and he began to think that he had never fully appreciated the character of this magnanimous girl, until he had lost her for ever. But these upbraidings of a delicate and honourable mind were soon mitigated by considerations of a more soothing Much as he admired and respected nature. Helen, grateful as he was for the affections she had bestowed upon him, and the frank liberality she had evinced in all the preliminary arrangements of their intended marriage, he could not



of securing happiness to himself.

Now, too, did he disc first time the full extent sion for Rose Mayhew. fanned by the breath of which had been so lor bosom kindled into a f more ardently when it fo had been so closely confi and independence, such to anticipate, even in float before his eyes, and over the sweet assurance his affection for her frie cated. Of this, indee cherished a suspicion, v tion, and above all her

on her revival in the boat, unconscious as she might be of her deportment on that occasion, placed beyond the reach of doubt.

From the difficulties and delicate scruples, which might still have separated those whom nature and accident had combined to bring together, they were liberated by the prompt intervention of Mrs. Hunter. That good lady's olio of exclamations, when she learnt the flight of Helen and its cause, as well as her surpassing generosity to Harriet Rose, was of too mosaic a character to admit of transcription.

"Only to think!" she repeatedly ejaculated, "only to think of Alfred not caring, after all, for Helen, rich as she was, and falling in love with that strange, wild-looking, odd girl, without a penny, who always seemed to me more like a little sprite than real flesh and blood. To be sure she won't look so, I dare say, now that she has got a fortune of her own. Well, I always liked her myself, ever since she gave

an excellent wife — only scratch, and is a terrible any cold fish in the cupbo of poor Madge. We sha't to Monkwell, after all, the affair, and I can think of no Dear! dear! what has be holder? It has been missiday."

By the aid of this active able negociator, a meeting the lovers, as soon as I recovered from her indistrassment of both parties previous exchange of the ceived from Helen. In told them that their courts

other. Notwithstanding this preparation for their first interview, Rose was so completely overcome that she trembled like an aspen leaf, and, shaking down her tresses over her burning cheeks, sunk into the arms of her lover, unable to articulate a word.

"O, Mr. Hunter!" she at length murmured, gently disengaging herself, as he pressed her to his bosom; "our dear Helen has truly told you that I have no parents, no relations, and now—now that my oldest, my best——forgive me this gush of tears; indeed, indeed, I cannot help it—now that Helen is torn away from me, I shall have no friend in the wide world but yourself. After what has passed, it were vain trifling to deny the state of my affections. I give up my whole heart to you; I will devote myself to your happiness, and, if you have any sorrows, I will share them with you. But oh! for my sake, for your own sake, for the sake of our dear, dear Helen, remember her solemn

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To this affecting ap attle reply, acknowle in Learning bad affor misgivings, but pledgi passioned ferrour, to: in his fature conduct ti Lis beloved Rose. J will less awkwaning ma is increasing a the arress enjoyed, in a de unimil comtable. inner, which already most the medical of t ارت مند. المناه عدي المناه مناه المناه ا income in the boson properly the magni अन्तर क्येश्वे धेल शि

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receive; and, notwithstanding her peremptory injunctions to the contrary, they determined on requesting her to diminish the amount of her gift, as soon as they should have learnt the place of her retreat.

In the course of a few days the fugitive imparted this secret, under the most solemn injunctions of secrecy, to Mary Lomax, who kindly undertook to snatch a moment from the melancholy affairs of Cypress House, and to communicate their joint wishes to Helen. In a reply, couched in terms of the most inflexible decision, she refused to make the smallest alteration in her arrangements, adding that she desired the whole money to be settled, so as to secure it against the possibility of future improvidence; and protesting that she would not put herself in correspondence with Rose until she received the intelligence of her marriage, which she wished to be celebrated, as she had before urged, without any further

During this interval, e patient of Helen's rec sime time been employ published it with such a he not only realised a co but made a most advansanitagiane works of literature. With th an independence for hin of Rose, he determined, Lett if bis mother, m with them, on returning ginally intended. This betteck themselves after there, for the present, w Sui and desolating h duced in these two sh

mind of the wretched

usual energy failed her the most deplorably when she had the greatest need of its assistance and support. Had she shared her husband's perpetual alarms about the return of Edward Ruddock to Europe, and the consequent detection and punishment of their crime, her bold spirit would have been braced up to a state of tension which might have rendered it less sensible to the present blow; but so long a time had now elapsed without any tidings of this dreaded claimant, or any other occurrence to excite reasonable alarm on the subject, that she had sunk into a fancied security, which only assisted to unnerve her.

As the paper kite, sustained and kept elate by the very string that threatens to drag it down, falters and falls to the ground when its hold is broken, and its influence no longer felt, so did Mrs. Lomax, who had kept bravely up while the halter around her neck seemed to be incessantly drawing her towards the place of

Benjamin, the only reinter her, is it were,
taching her to it, was
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that I violated the lawine sake that I gave over
pendition; and he is tak

he is dead! Nothing cave I cained by my wie

It was remarkable that after the death of Benjamin she never ventured to trust her lips with the utterance of his name, although she referred to him, either directly or indirectly, nearly as often as she spoke. Her own thoughts being entirely engrossed with one object, she did not suppose it possible that her hearers could imagine her to be alluding to any other. Her son had been the whole world to her while he was alive, and out of that world she could not wander, now that he was dead.

Many sufferers under a distressing bereavement seek to stimulate the memory, and, at the same time, to alleviate their sorrows, by wearing about their persons the miniature, the hair, or some other memento of the cherished object they have lost, as if they were not altogether separated while yet able to gaze upon these present memorials of the departed. The grief of Mrs. Lomax was oo intense and

mike ting the midel h 1 of him is a Smile ! Figure 10 m

hue of marble, and her counteexpression of fixed and calm deb much more appalling to behold lolent paroxysms of passion. ion of sensibility, the more its contrast to the usual vehemperament, was dispelled by vial in itself, but not unimconsequences. In removing had belonged to the deceased, ints found a sealed letter admistress, to whom he immed it. As she recognised the ting of her son, a cry of surn her lips, her heart throbbed her trembling hands hardly break open the paper, of which were the contents:

dearest Mother!

the place in which I have purted this letter, you will not, in all

broken recollection, her h tain any additional exciteme and it was her first order, t thing should be carefully sight which might awaker niscences, or interfere wi which he already formed th wished her eyes and ears to order that she might brood of him in the silence of he a fonder and more entire at For the first fortnight a was completely stunned l dering about the house in and scarcely conscious of issuing the orders to which

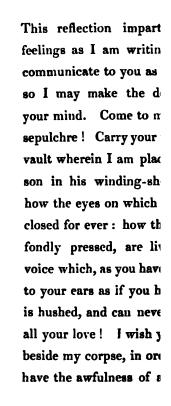
Hitherto she had not shed a

as well as the hue of marble, and her countenance were that expression of fixed and calm despair, which is so much more appalling to behold than the most violent paroxysms of passion.

This suspension of sensibility, the more noticeable from its contrast to the usual vehemence of her temperament, was dispelled by an incident, trivial in itself, but not unimportant in its consequences. In removing some books that had belonged to the deceased, one of the servants found a sealed letter addressed to his mistress, to whom he immediately delivered it. As she recognised the well-known writing of her son, a cry of surprise burst from her lips, her heart throbbed violently, and her trembling hands hardly enabled her to break open the paper, of which the following were the contents:

## " Dearest, dearest Mother!

"From the place in which I have purposely deposited this letter, you will not, in all



your memory from a mass of clay and corruption; in order that you may detach yourself from the earth, and think only how to secure our future and inseparable union in the realms of bliss.

"Mother! be comforted for my loss. This will be my last prayer on earth, my first aspiration from the world of spirits. Nowhere, nowhere can this comfort be found except in religion. You will have seen how its divine assurances supported me, even in my separation from the best, the fondest, the most indulgent of parents.

"Mother! I have addressed my letter to you, because I foresee that your grief will be the most acute, your heart the most inconsolable; but I wish this posthumous warning and entreaty to be communicated to my dear father, and my ever affectionate Mary, with my renewed thanks for all their tenderness and love, my renewed entreaties for forgiveness

As she perused this electrified mother start stupor of her grief, her sudden revulsion, the p heart was smitten, as if forth the grave, and the from her eyes in a passi were the first tears she h of her son, and they affo relief, that she almost away, although they baff as she strove to reperuse was fain, therefore, to p both hands, as she indi blessed boy! my angelic thee ! - I will obey thee

In losing Benjamin, she had lost all consolation, all joy, all hope. The splendour with which she was surrounded became hateful in her sight, as an accusing evidence of her guilt; she found no relief in opulence, no pleasure in society, no charm in existence. Earth was now a hell to her; and, if she ventured to turn her thoughts heavenward, she felt herself repelled from the very threshold, and driven back to wander and to mourn, as a hopeless outcast, in a cheerless and detested world.

"Oh! that he had been taken from me," would she sometimes ejaculate, in the bitterness of her self-upbraidings, "before I had forfeited my hopes of mercy by this mad and useless crime; for then, then could I have endured life and have welcomed death in the soulentrancing prospect of rejoining him. Accurated wretch that I am! what avails it that he is at this moment kneeling for me at the throne of grace? His intercessions cannot be heard, for

and silvery voice calling a cannot answer, for I am a Look, look, he is leaning a golden ringlets fall forwathis arms, and invites me lestial smile of love, buthim, for Satan has fast he dragging me downward rible!"

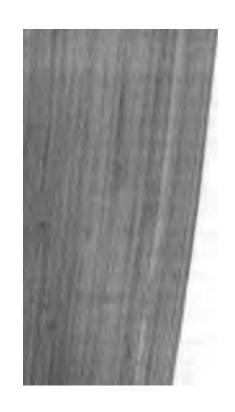
At this moment, she s with a momentary delir chancing to enter the ro him, and grasping him by hands, screamed out as him:

"Villain! villain! it was

and cutting us off from all chance of joining our blessed boy hereafter!"

"Jane! dear Jane!" croaked the terrified and half-throttled husband, "for Heaven's sake, speak not so loud, you will be overheard. How am I to blame? Who was it that first suggested the crime to me? who combated and ridiculed all my objections? who urged, nay, drove, me forward with threats, when I would have abandoned the enterprize? who assisted from first to last in its execution, but you, you, you?"

"It is too true! it is too true!" sighed the wife, speaking in a calmer tone, and relaxing her hold; "I despise you for your unmanly cowardice in yielding to my menaces, and I detest myself for the guilty audacity that impelled you forwards. Yes; I scorn, I loathe, both myself and you—both the instigator and the instrument of our crime. Joel, let us come to an understanding. I am miserable beyond



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your life, your life, your life, by n over a precarry into:

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heir. We must undo the wrong that we have perpetrated: it is better late than never. I will go before a magistrate, alone, if you hesitate to accompany me, and confess our crime, and offer to make full restitution of our spoil, by which voluntary surrender we may perhaps—"

"Gracious Heaven!" interrupted the husband, utterly aghast with terror, "do you mean what you say?—are you mad? Would you not only steep us once more to the lips in poverty, but expose us to shame, to imprisonment, to the risk of a public execution?"

"By our voluntary confession, and the restoration of our plunder, we may not improbably escape the heavier penalties of the law, and, by thus gaining time for repentance, be enabled to make our peace with Heaven, and be ultimately admitted into the society of our blessed son. With this prospect in view, oh how joyfully would I undergo poverty, scorn,

shudder," said the hus features had been gradus hue. "What! sink aga and squalid misery! equipage, our rare win dinners, our burnt bra

Every argument and a could command was east appalling scheme of his buted to a temporary a she clung to her project gedness that gathered strand Lomax, whose ter tellect, refrained from a he saw the inutility, and her present irritable mo

will be herself again," he thought. "I must gain time and watch her closely, and never trust her out of my sight."

The sound of his daughter's voice suggested to him a new and more potent dissuasive than any he had hitherto advanced; he enlarged upon the monstrous cruelty of rushing upon a desperate measure which would inevitably break off Mary's marriage, involve her in their own ignominy, and render her miserable for life.

"You will not," he exclaimed in conclusion, 
"you will not destroy this innocent, this excellent, this affectionate girl. I am sure 
you will not. You have not the heart to do 
it."

"The heart! the heart!" echoed the wife, smiling in bitter spirit. "I have no heart. My bosom has emptied itself into the grave where he is lying, stiff and stark. But you are right. I had forgotten poor Mary. Better to endure my own misery a little longer, than to entail

shame and misery upon her. But can I, can I suffer this intolerable anguish? I know not which way to turn me, nor how to act, and I dare not call upon Heaven to assist me. Go! begone, leave me! I cannot talk to any one, least of all to you. I must commune with my own sad thoughts."

The heart of Lomax sank within him as he obeyed her, for he saw by her bewildered looks that her faculties were beginning to wander and, though she appeared for the moment thave abandoned her terrific project, he dreaded lest, in some fit of ungovernable passion of dark despair, she might still rush upon its execution.

## CHAPTER VIII.

"This, this is woe!

Despair and anguish darken round their view,

And all but sorrow seems to be untrue."

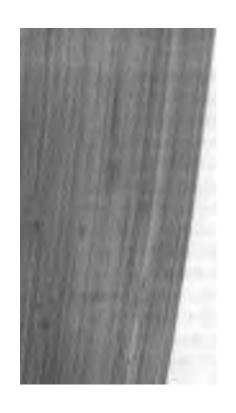
R. Montgomery.

"She's lost for ever!
It was a dreadful moment; not the tears,

The lingering, lasting misery of years, Could match that minute's anguish."

Moore.

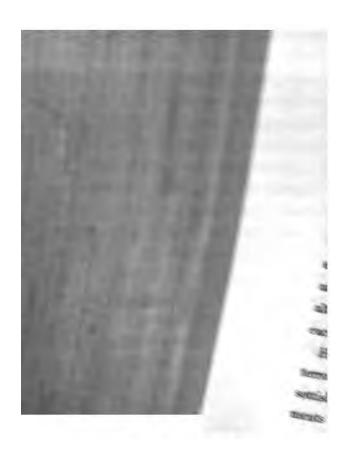
MARY LOMAN'S anxiety, alarms, and dark misgivings, during this most distressing period, we shall not attempt to record. It had been agreed that her marriage should be deferred for three months, and, though the expiration of this term was now near at hand, she could not chase from her mind a sinister foreboding that some unexpected discovery or calamitous event



posed posed and she canough alterentia not shut hasty exp which fail painful sau Latterly, come more could in that the prost imbecility in sunk, after the cated a mind is than by grief

apprehensions; she could not assign any specific form to her fears, importunate as they were a they might, indeed, be altogether visionary, and she would not suffer the shadows thus passing over her soul to diminish her gratitude for the sunshine with which it was refreshed at this season of sore trial.

Foremost among the solaces that sustained her was the affectionate sympathy of her lover, who shared her troubles and her counsels, and relieved her, by his considerate interference, from many of the painful duties thrown upon her by the indisposition of her parents. His gentle, unobtrusive virtues, like flowers that blow in the dark, seemed to develop themselves more kindly at this season of gloom, and Mary had never felt herself half so much attached to him as when he dropped the language of courtship, and merged the character of the lover in that of the friend, the comforter, and the adviser.



his daughter and wife to their fate; a cruel and perfidious intention, which was accidentally detected by the latter, who warned him, with the bitterest upbraidings, that, if he persisted in his design, she would divulge his guilt to the whole world, and cause his instant apprehension.

Unhappy woman! she knew not in this distressing emergency how to act, whither to turn; nor had she any friend to whom she could apply for counsel, even if she could have sought advice, without betraying the fatal secret of her crime. Shattered by the combined assaults of distrust, hatred, remorse, and intense grief, her once powerful mind gave way with a rapidity accelerated by the unnatural state of tension in which it had so long been held. Several times had she stolen out in the night to throw herself upon her son's grave, whence she had been brought back weeping and sobbing, but without uttering a syllable, or oppo-

and, seating herself in a for hours in a seemingly twitching her fingers, an vacant look upon the bed aroused from this gloon glare wildly or menacing and seek some other plagain brood without interest thoughts.

Sometimes these glood ceeded by fits of violence stamp upon the floor, ter and shriek with all the ve Nor was the alteration in signal than the change quickly wrought in her a her commanding figure nified carriage was exchanged for the equivocal and furtive deportment of the conscience-stricken culprit, who seeks concealment, and shrinks from every passing gaze: while the clear intellect that used to beam forth from her fine expressive features, like a mental sun, was succeeded by a wild or vacant eye, and a look of imbecility, when her face was not disturbed by the angrier paroxyms that gave it a phrensied aspect.

Lomax had placed in attendance upon his wife a trusty nurse, who was strictly enjoined never to lose sight of her patient, and to lock her up at night, so as to prevent her stealing out of the house. Although her disease only wore the character of incipient aberration of mind, for she was generally in the full possession of her faculties, he thought that a physician might be found who would warrant her confinement in a private mad-house, a measure on which his whole heart was now set, since it

the mind of Lomax, who, coward as he was, would gladly have accomplished the death of his confederate, could it have been done without the possibility of detection. Let not the reader start at this averment. Nothing is so ruthless as the fear engendered by guilt, and rarely, indeed, does it stop at a single transgression. Every offence is pregnant with another, and each comes into the world accompanied by its avenger, for remorse is the twin of crime.

In her early career, Mrs. Lomax would have shuddered at the remotest contemplation of murder; but we have seen how quickly after her first misdeed in the forgery of the will, she thought of strangling Diedrich Hoffman, when his apprehended recovery threatened her with exposure. Placed in nearly the same predicament, her husband could now meditate a similar enormity, from which he was only withheld by a dread of its discovery, and the hope of effecting his

panics, had recently leterror had, in fact, swal he required not to be hat palling spectre than that confession before a mag him as a felon.

Grimsby, the fanatic

pened to return at this visit to Cypress Hous claimed, as he beheld M the fearful ravages of a "What! have you not mighty?—are you still n your son?"

"No; I am miserable alive," was her reply, t hollow voice. "I am mad, because I can never hope to rejoin him when I die."

"That despairing thought is the suggestion of the evil spirit: cast it from you, or you will fall into the snares of Satan."

"Fall into his snares!" shouted the guilty woman. "Ha! ha! ha! what foolery is this? He has got my soul already: I feel him grasping it with his talons. Look, look! there he stands—do you not see him yonder, grinning, and mocking, and mowing at me?"

"Ha! is it so!" said Grimsby. "Did I not tell you that God would punish your idolatry by removing your idol, and draw you towards himself, by leaving you no prop or support upon earth. Did I not say that in your hour of darkness and trial I would revisit you, and endeavour to guide you heavenward? Behold, I am come to redeem my pledge."

"Guide me heavenward! guide me to those blissful mansions where he, the heart of my

materia is the abidia not of such guilty we Gransoy, who was resecration saw the introduction a remotise of benéers et despair, a s it had other been his I in the habit of attendi execution, and had be ministering spiritual i sent off some of the vil scaffold, enraptured w they would ascend inst less certainly and imm tial beatitudes than the gressed.

His fluent eloquenc

a persuasive, almost an ingratiating character, which was but too well calculated to assist the dangerous delusion of his doctrines. In almost daily interviews he impressed upon his willing auditress the utter depravity of human nature, the nullity of good works towards salvation, the powerlessness of the human will, the certainty of election and reprobation, and the impossibility of forfeiting grace. "If you are once of the elect," he argued, "no sin can deprive you of heaven; if you are one of the rejected, no good works can avail towards salvation."

"I was once innocent," sighed Mrs. Lomax.

"Oh! if I could only believe that I had ever been in a state of grace!"

A clue was now furnished to the fanatic, who plied his beguiling sophistries with such perseverance and effect, that his disciple eventually believed herself to be one of the elect. Had



parame interpreside with an inspeciable e the delightful hopes to

The thought of enjoying it the society of

without making restite earn, and therefore either herself, or her too cutrating a ten Incessantly did she b and feed it by the p receil works as were Grimsby.

In the same proport her errors, did they u crease the wanderings her mind, which now b remain upon earth to be persecuted with misery and the perpetual apprehensions of discovery and exposure, when she might, as one of the elect, commit suicide without offence, and be instantly transported to the arms and embraces of her beloved son?

No sooner had this desperate project taken possession of her mind than she set about its accomplishment with the cunning and stealth that not unusually characterise a partial derangement. In spite of her now tranquil mood, her terrified and distrustful husband had not neglected any of his precautions, the nurse being still directed to watch her constantly by day, and to lock her chamber-door at night.

This constraint, when she first discovered it, threw her back into one of her violent moods. The idea of being coerced and made a prisoner by her husband, by her accomplice, by one whom she scorned for his pusillanimity,

men is remaining a ment in the window. The remaining the presentation of the parties with remaining. This even the remaining the thought meanlies his such size Lauring and the remaining it for minut.

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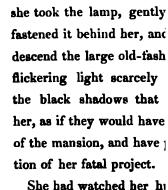
milyum, she deprived furny e viole right m of eximpsion, as the offered to sink him a p conquadra, manually a

Freeholing at he san

and, throwing herself on a sofa, presently began to snore aloud. This was the signal for the watchful invalid, who arose noiselessly from her bed, and made it her first care to purloin the key, an object in which she succeeded without difficulty; and a fortunate circumstance for the nurse, whose life, had she awoke and offered any resistance, would hardly have been safe from the calm desperation of her patient.

With the strange inconsistency of a disordered mind, Mrs. Lomax, instead of hurrying to make her escape, proceeded to her wardrobe, arrayed herself in her best attire, put rings upon her fingers and jewels in her hair; now viewing herself in the glass with the assistance of a lamp, and now casting a glance at her sleeping companion, with the fell determination of attempting to strangle her, should her deep slumber be broken.

It was nearly midnight, when, being be-



She had watched her he as to have discovered who key of the garden gate, found, and, opening the bound into the garden. Wet, a dark, the night seemed to the desperate purpose bent.

As she passed beneath

moan, and her appearance at this moment was sufficiently strange, not to say spectral, to have appalled the stoutest spectator, had she been encountered by any human eye. From the fear that the noise of her shoes might betray her, she had discarded them, and strode furtively and on tiptoe along the wet walk, her mouth half open, her eyes fixed and staring, her haggard features animated with an expression of wild triumph, and her jewels sparkling, as the lamp threw its fitful light upon her face; while, at other moments, the upper portion of her form was enveloped in darkness, and nothing could be discerned but her bare feet as they moved inaudibly over the soaked and glistening gravel.

The garden gate was soon reached and opened, when she again took up the lamp, not considering, in the disordered state of her mind, that its rays were likely, by attracting observation, to reveal her purpose, and pre-

in deep darkness, hurrie that led to the river.

From the lateness of of the weather, not a she had scarcely caught quick breathing, though suppressed, when she for tremity of a small jetty yards into the stream. of a high tide darkly feet, she clasped her had look of wild delight upon then, pronouncing the the first time since his "Benjamin! my below coming, I am coming!"

threw herself headlang in

they opened to engulph her, and a wharf dog, startled by the noise, barked deeply and repeatedly; but no human ear had caught the sound, no hand was stretched forth to save her. Had the attempt been made, it would probably have been unavailing, for, when the wretched suicide rose, after a brief interval, to the surface, she merely pronounced once more the word "Benjamin!" and then, voluntarily sinking downwards with a stern desperation, compelled herself to die!

The body was found on the following day; and the coroner's inquest, having learnt her previous state of mind, immediately returned a verdict of temporary insanity.

## CELFTI

The Resident may be seen in price the table of so the Vincture of state facilities from some tip of measures

This invaling same the the desired a fact residually interhed, while strength of mind thereby i much gentleness and sent the alter lever, whose happing ferred to an indichate

an absolute despondency, although they could neither dispel her melancholy, nor dissipate the dark misgivings which now haunted her with a more importunate obstinacy than ever. In general, she had no belief in omens and prognostics, no superstitious apprehension that "coming events cast their shadows before;" but two or three dreams of evil augury had saddened her heart with the notion that her marriage with Barlow would never take place, a misgiving of which her most strenuous efforts could not altogether disabuse her mind.

In addition to these various sources of annoyance, the lamentable state into which her father sunk immediately after the funeral of his wife agitated her with incessant alarms, and saddened her with the most poignant grief. It might have been surmised that the comparative security in which he was placed by the death of an accomplice, who had so frequently threatened to turn king's evidence, would have tended to

tion of mind and agonies became infinitely more de Accustomed for many the ascendency of his upon her for counsel and gency, so that the natura tics had been confirmed implicitly following her indeed, he had been frigh resistance of her authority her almost daily, he had the rancour of selfishnes never denied her talent courage, and even, in the tion, had depended upo whom nothing could das

table energies he revive

gone! the stimulus of her opposition was removed, he was now the sole depository of their fatal secret, and the very consciousness that every thing depended upon himself, that he was left without an adviser or confederate to combat the dreaded Edward Ruddock, completely unhinged and unbalanced a mind which had never possessed sufficient equipoise to support itself without assistance.

Always weak and irresolute, he was now generally unable to decide upon any thing, however trifling, or, if his state of suspence and vacillation became so intolerable as to drive him into some hasty resolution, he wanted courage to earry it into effect, and relapsed into his pristine indecision. Sometimes he recurred to his long-cherished design of absconding to America with all his property; then, again, as he adverted to the baseness and cruelty of thus deserting Mary, and blasting all her prospects in life, he determined to wait until after her marriage,

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At the juncture, the ne wern ilusans ri he had सामाजन्ति । असाराज्य ma vii i mar milion designeral via glasij numeral la la mara ध्यक्षान ब्रह्मात्रका ने देव turnei mysrės soi so ivi combine been th faci as other refere tha manana . zal. z sp street here he new becau m messame dreakard. sufficiently scientisting. rere brandy, indulging i are exercised in the more have in a state of inest

Not with impunity could be thus abuse and stupify his faculties. Rapid and total derangement of his health, together with temporary fits of hypochondriacism, alternating with moods of delirious violence, were the consequences of his excess; but the habit of sottishness had now become so uncontrollable, that if his unhappy daughter denied him access to ardent spirits he became perfectly outrageous, and with horrid imprecations and menaces compelled her to restore the fatal fluid, admitting its destructive tendencies, but vociferating that he was willing to purchase temporary oblivion, even at the expence of madness and death itself.

A violent cold, caught in one of his sleep-walkings, aggravated by neglect and the morbid state of his body, ended in an inflammation, which quickly assumed a threatening aspect, and ultimately baffled all the resources of medicine. His physician, availing himself of a temporary intermission of his patient's sufferings,

uses.

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He musted for everywhele to common hims and compressional states and recommending him close since he feared tune to live track his not to a trace it.

In these two or three against the mind of I can be seen by thread a

lulled his anguish; while the flame of life, blazing with that unnatural brightness which sometimes precedes its extinction, imparted to his faculties a clearness of perception to which he had long been a stranger. Alas! his eyes were unsealed only to be seared with darkness and desolation.

Tied to his bed as to a stake, remorse, anguish, and dread, baited him on every side, tearing his heart with their relentless fangs, while he was utterly unable to obtain respite or relief, in whatever direction he might seek it. Retrospect was intolerable; to look forward was still more appalling; there was no time to extenuate the guilt of the past by atonement, or to disarm the future of its terrors by repentance. His sensations told him that Death was hovering with uplifted dart above his head; and, as his ordinary selfishness became superseded by despair, his thoughts reverted to his daughter, whose affectionate solicitude and attentions, during all his

himself. "She must not b of the terrible perils that Edward Ruddock retur tion, should a discovery b totally unprepared for the that are even now, perhaj her defenceless head, the her like a thunderbolt. not, must not, will not, le ing her of her danger, be aware of its existence repel it. She may sec fly to America - she ma with Ruddock - she me spasms warn me to be Mary!"

Quick as an embodied plied by her instant pre

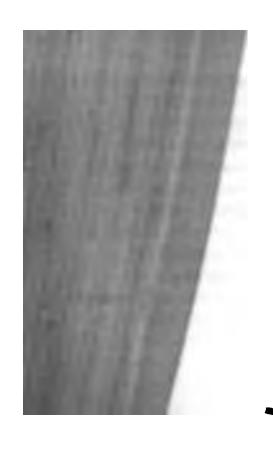
the suddenness of her appearance seemed to scare her father, who gazed wildly around him, as if he had forgotten his purpose. Recovering his recollection, he bade her lock the door, and seat herself by his side, which she did accordingly; but it was still some time before he could summon courage to make the confession he intended.

Twice did the wretched man begin and stop short; at length, however, collecting his be-wildered faculties, he said, in a hoarse whisper, "Mary! are you sure that we are quite—quite alone—that no one can hear us?"

An answer was given in the affirmative.

"My dear child!" he resumed, "I am dying
—I must shortly leave you—I feel the cold iron
hand of Death upon my heart — and, ere I am
called away to answer for my misdeeds, I would
at least make the only atonement that is left, by
confessing them."

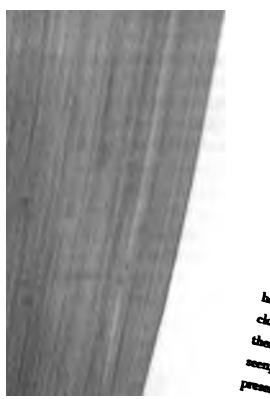
"Shall I send for a clergyman, dear father?



miliating confession as concisely as possible, he continued:—

"Mary! I am a culprit, a criminal, a felon! The large fortune we possess was obtained by an infamous fraud. Hoffman had left the whole of it to his nephew, Edward Ruddock, but, at the instigation of your mother — who wanted, however, to enrich her beloved Benjamin, rather than herself, or me, or you — I forged a new will in my own favour, and defrauded the rightful heir!"

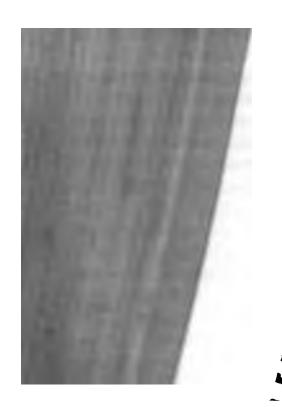
"Forged a will!" shrieked the daughter, starting from her seat, and striking her hands violently together, while her countenance expressed an agony of consternation and amazement; "forged a will!—O God! my latent misgivings, and your own prelude to the announcement, had prepared me for some deed of darkness, but never, never did I anticipate any thing half so horrible as this! We are lost, utterly lost!" And she again clasped her hands,



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himself had hung upon a peg, in a corner of the chamber.

Humouring his delusion - the most effectual means, as she had found by experience, for dispelling it - she assured him that his enemy had fled from the room, a fact which her miserable parent verified by a stealthy and timid glance around the apartment; when he drew a deep inspiration, and continued, "So, I can breathe again, now I am no longer haunted by that menacing spectre with his basilisk eye, that seems to look through my very heart. Is he out of hearing, gone, fled? Well, then, what did he witness after all, that you should be afraid of him when I am gone? He saw me in the dead of night, committing a paper to the flames, but he knew not its nature, its contents, and I defy him to prove that it was the genuine will. Edward Ruddock, when we last heard tidings of him, was confined to his bed by a dangerous malady. Let us hope that he died of



shouted Lomax, as he suddenly started up in his

- "The eye of God!" replied Mary, casting her looks reverently downwards.
- A long shuddering groan escaped from the bosom of her guilty parent, who again cowered beneath the bed-clothes, as if to hide himself, hoursely whispering, "It is too true! it is too true! I am indeed a lost and guilty wretch! God has seen, and God will punish my transgression!"

There was a silence of several minutes, for the voice of Lomax was stifled in despair, and the emotions that tore the bosom of Mary, too distressful for utterance, were only to be gathered from her gestures. With an expression of the most poignant anguish, she cast her eyes appealingly upwards, as if imploring mercy for her father, repeatedly clasped her hands together, shook her head as if in utter hopelessness, compressed her lips in the vain attempt to check her

"Do not, do not wee Lomax, when he again "it is fit that I should of no common turpitud good, so pure, whose wi and unbroken perform: Mary! I cannot, canno deep affliction. Cheer u may yet go well, so far, cerned-and pay attent -it is my last wish, n nay, my command, th take place as soon after will allow; for, should land, or any discovery infinitely less consequer no longer solitary and with a protector by 3 low."

" Marriage with Barlow!" vehemently exclaimed Mary, giving impetuous utterance to the bitter reflections over which she had been brooding; "marriage with Barlow! away, away for ever with the dishonest, the nefarious thought! As surely as I am now sitting by your side, this hidden crime will be discovered; it must, it must !--it will be divulged, made manifest, published to all the world; and, believing this as firmly as I do my own existence, think you that I would be base and fraudulent enough to give my hand to Evelyn Barlow? What! shall I suffer him to marry the daughter of a felon?shall I expose the man I love above all others to a life-long misery and disgrace which I would not heap upon my bitterest enemy? Shall I subject him to the ignominy of a public trial, and the compulsory restitution of my fortune? Shall I knowingly, basely, treacherously, inflict a wife upon him with whom he could never walk abroad without being pointed at by the uplifted finger



I know not; for I am a this terrible revelation: mind is already made a nitively—I cannot and w cruel and unwarrantable Barlow."

"I did not advert to to me," said Lomax; "I principles, and the decisi now see it all. Too clear! fatal consequences of my Heaven that I had never terribly, and yet how j wretched accomplice b crime! The dear boy, it was committed, was sn a premature death. Not

either of his parents enjoy after the day of their transgression. One has terminated her miserable career by suicide; and I, wretch that I am, I am dying amid bodily and mental anguish, with the additional pang of knowing that I have destroyed the happiness of, and entailed probable disgrace and poverty upon, a beloved daughter, the sole survivor of our family. If these are the consequences, even of a successful and undiscovered crime, oh! how sharp, how intolerable, must be the agony of that which is exposed and punished!"

Mary made no reply, for she was oppressed with sad thoughts; and, feeling the truth of what her father had just uttered, she knew not what to say, nor how to offer him a single word of consolation. Lomax, too, sunk into a desponding reverie; his thoughts were upon his daughter. Adverting to her painful and impassioned declaration on the subject of her marriage, he gave way to an unusual burst of tenderness and ruth;

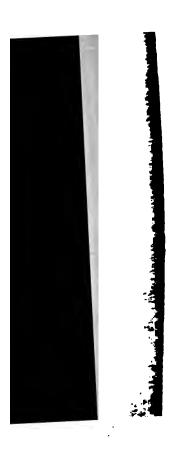


morseless enemy; you 1 my memory; but I mea will you, can you forgiv "O my dear father!" hand and pressing it to should implore pardon fear you have constru knew not what I was sa came me. Alas! wha prospects compared to selfishly have intruded th Not from me, not from offended Deity, should and mercy. Oh! let t this 'all-important duty instantly for a clergyma "No, I cannot bear

secret. But you can kneel down and pray for me, dear Mary. Your intercessions, my innocent and injured child, may perhaps be heard. As for me, desperate as is my need, I dare not implore remission of my sins."

In obedience to the wishes of her father, Mary threw herself upon her knees by the bed-side, and, trusting to the spontaneous eloquence inspired by deep feeling, besought the forgiveness of Heaven for the dying penitent. As Lomax gazed upon the pallid features of his daughter, rendered still more wan by the deep mourning in which she was arrayed, as he marked the trembling of her clasped hands, the suffusion of her upturned eyes, and listened to the vehement earnestness of her appealing voice, the deep agony of his soul seemed for a moment to be allayed.

But this respite was of brief duration. After a short interval his pains returned, a paroxysm of dismay succeeded to the calm, and he



painfainess, or appeal reader, we have never me pen of the novelist.

Willingly, therefore, around the death bed morning sun arose, he

## CHAPTER X.

To keep me from a most unholy match."

SHARSPEARE.

RARELY, perhaps, in the history of human calamity, had a young and orphaned female been assailed by a more harrowing combination of trials and distresses than those with which Mary Lomax was now doomed to contend. The loss of a beloved brother, the quickly succeeding death of both her parents under circumstances so awful and appalling, the dreadful, the humiliating secret bequeathed by them, and the probable disgrace and desti-

VOL. III.



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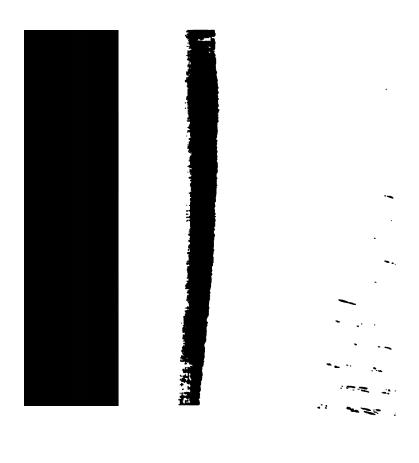
support a conversation

Barlow, in the mea delicacy and attention the arrangements of th mistress, and best calculated to save her from every painful application or exertion.

Stunned and astounded as she had been at first, Mary obtained leisure, in this most distressing interval, to rally a little from the effects of the visitation that had fallen upon her, and to summon her energies to her aid.

Her naturally strong mind seemed to be invigorated by the necessity for exertion; and, although her heart was wrung, tortured, lacerated to its very core, she never faltered for a single moment, when she had ultimately decided what course to adopt. The more she reflected, the more deeply rooted became her conviction that she was imperatively bound to separate herself from Barlow, at once and for ever.

Upon this subject her first resolution and her last were identical. To delude him into marriage and into ultimate misery and disgrace, by a fraudulent suppression of the truth,



## " My dear Friend!

"With a frame debilitated by sleeplessness and ill-health, with a bleeding and almost
broken heart, I am called upon to discharge a
duty of the most distressing nature, a duty
rendered still more agonising by the cousciousness that it will both afflict and affront
you, without my having the power to explain
the motives of my conduct, and the stern, the
inexorable necessity under which I am acting.

"O, Mr. Barlow! all our fond vows must be recalled, all our prospects of mutual happiness are gone for ever, our engagement must be instantly and definitively broken off—I can never, never, never be your wife! A disclosure of the most harrowing description, made to me by my father upon his death-bed, has placed an insuperable bar between us. Ask me not its nature; it is an impenetrable secret. If you knew it, you would be the first to approve my inflexible resolution, the first to thank



"Alas! what a ha mine! I am innocent tions are unaltered; as mystery of my position capricious, heartless, and hateful in your e you once professed for my pride to have me judge me in charity as upon the fallen, crus Most solemnly can I acceptions and kindne me more than ever: 1 that, in thus suddenly bends, and flying, as 

whose happiness is infinitely more dear to me than my own.

"Farewell, farewell for ever! When you think of me, let it be with pity and with pardon. Better would it be, however, that you should forget me altogether, by transferring your affections to some other, who, while she appreciates the value of your attachment not less fully than myself, may be at liberty to reciprocate it—a privilege which can never be enjoyed by

"Your ill-fated friend,
"MARY LOMAX."

For the delay in writing and transmitting this letter there were other and most cogent reasons, besides the state of her bodily and mental health. Struck by the singular resemblance of her fate to that of Helen, although the sudden infraction of her intended marriage proceeded from so different a cause, she re-

power on earth could have forced him to prepare and sign any such instrument—a repugnance which he had little occasion to conquer, as he had no relation in the world but Mary, who succeeded, as a matter of course, to all his property.

The legal proceedings necessary to establish this claim occasioned a delay of several days, and, before she would trust herself to the hazards of a journey, she thought it her duty to make her will.

From the first moment when her father had stung her ear by the tidings of his guilt, she had resolved to restore to the rightful proprietor every shilling that was left of the fortune wrested from him; and, not knowing at present how or where to find him, she determined to secure this purpose, in the event of her own death, by naming him her sole heir.

Having made these arrangements, she left London, accompanied by her maid, on the very



he perused it, that for s the evidence of his ser and over in increasing arriving at any other co whole was an inexplical writing, indeed, was Ma entertain no doubt; bu nounced, utterly oppose previous sentiments ar astounded him.

In the hope of obtain the mystery, he hurried solved to demand an int tion. Mary had left it nouncing her intention quitting London, that it became impossible to track her course.

Baffled in every attempt of this nature, the disconcerted Barlow hastened to communicate the strange tidings to his father, who, instead of condoling with him as he had expected, openly expressed his delight at the intelligence. Upright and honourable in his principles, and warmly attached to his son, the old gentleman would never have interfered with an engagement which had advanced so far towards completion; but many recent occurrences had combined to make him deeply regret that it had ever been formed. The mystery and the fatality that had latterly lowered over the whole Lomax family, the quarrels of the parents, the suicide of the mother, the low sottishness of the father, and the suspected mental derangement of both parties, constituted an array of objections which had recently awakened in his mind an utter aversion from the marriage.



have. In no other we handsomely out of the girl comes forward and whether you will or no, yourself; and God forb attempt to renew the eng don't look so downcast happiest day of your littell you."

"I am no guesser of plain man of the world matter is this: when t have you, her brother alive. They are now de unexpectedly the sole

she may do better than marry a shipbuilder's

"On my life, sir, you do her injustice," exclaimed Evelyn with some warmth; "a less ambitious or sordid girl I never knew. Mary is incapable of any thing so ungenerous, so base. Inscrutable as they may seem, I am confident that her motives are good."

"'Disclosure of the most painful description,'" muttered the father, poring over the letter for the second time—"'insuperable bar—'curse of your whole future life'—'innocent of all offence'— why, where are your eyes, boy? The meaning of the whole matter is clear enough. Her father has confessed to her on his death bed, probably under a solemu injunction of secresy, that there is hereditary madness in the family; and, like a good girl, and a wise girl, and an honest girl, and an innocent girl, for such she is, after all, she will not, with the knowledge of this 'insuperable bar,' hold



or she wouldn't have father was mad, or he in his sleep, and wande time, starting at nothing berish to himself. Benja other boy; if he had liv have found his way to B be something odd and w self-perhaps she alread family malady—or she from her home in this accompanied by her mai the world, the Lord kr This being the case, and doubt upon the subject, than take her advice and look about you for

don't deny her attractions—without being descended from crazy and suicidal parents."

In the impossibility of obtaining any other satisfactory clue to the meaning of the letter, Evelyn, after again carefully perusing it, was reluctantly compelled to adopt his father's solution, which, however painful, brought with it one redeeming consideration; it justified Mary's conduct—it absolved her from all blame - it confirmed her averment that he would be the first to approve her resolution, the first to thank Heaven that their nuptials had been prevented. Coinciding in the inevitable necessity for this severance, and the propriety of her departure from London, he felt that she had decided rightly in concealing the place of her retreat, so as to cut off at once, and for ever, all communication between them. Under these painful circumstances, he had no alternative but to yield to the decree of fate-to bear the disappointment of his hopes with as much fortitude as possible, and to trust that change of scene, and the healing influences of time, would remove the deep dejection that now oppressed his heart.

Mary Lomax, not knowing in what other direction to betake herself, had determined to seek refuge with Helen Owen, until she should be enabled to decide upon her future plans. In the hurry and anxiety of her departure from London, she had omitted to apprise her of her intention, so that the surprise of her friend, when, on her arrival at Ilfracombe, which was now the place of Helen's residence, she proceeded to her house, and threw herself into her arms, may be more easily imagined than described.

"My dear Helen!" exclaimed the traveller, after the first flurry of greeting and inquiry had somewhat subsided, "I come to claim your friendship and assistance in a predicament so extremely delicate and painful, that I hesitated

for some time before I could make up my mind to intrude upon your retreat; but I said to myself, if the cases were reversed — if Helen were in my place, and I in her's — how should I act? My heart told me that I should receive you with joy, and I did not therefore hesitate another moment in directing my flight hither, concluding that your's would equally sympathize with a friend in distress."

"Thank you, thank you, my dear Mary!" exclaimed Helen, affectionately pressing her to her heart; "you have decided in a manner worthy of yourself, and most flattering to me. Oh! how delighted am I to see you once more, though I little expected it so soon after the late melancholy occurrences."

"Alas, dear Helen! I have known nothingbut melancholy occurrences — nothing but losses, calamities, and horrors, since last we parted. Let me hasten to apprize you of the total change in my situation and prospects.



" Penniless! destitute wealthy, and your marris

"It will never, never, posed Mary in a broken veyes. "All is over! I broken it off; but not for of Mr. Barlow, who is amiable and excellent."

"Good heavens! do l stand you rightly? WI have driven you to such comprehensible, proceed

"That is a secret whi locked up in my own be consent to remain here,

suitor, but my peace of mind requires it — a cruel necessity drives me on — I cannot help myself."

"I am too glad to have you upon any terms, my dear friend, not to give you the promise you require. Upon this interdicted subject I swear to you that my lips shall be perpetually sealed."

"Thank you, thank you a thousand times," ejaculated Mary. "Perhaps I may not long be a restraint upon your curiosity, or a burthen upon your friendship, for I only purpose to remain here until I shall be enabled to settle my future proceedings."

"And why should not your plan embrace a permanent residence at Ilfracombe, beneath the roof that now covers us? There is so marked, so marvellous, a similarity in our fates, at least upon *one* point, and there must be so close a sympathy in our feelings, that, having been fortunately thrown together, we ought never to



my constant companior supply the loss of my d

Mary made a suitable tionate speech, and the the conversation to les subjects; but she was long. Exhausted by the and the agitation of her wish her friend good early hour, and to retire

It was her first care, to tions of Helen had recorded residence, and in som equanimity, to write to inquiring whether he coof Edward Product

In his reply, the Doctor stated that the object of her inquiry, after having recovered from the dangerous fever with which he had been attacked at Buenos Ayres, had abandoned his intention of returning to Europe, and had penetrated into the interior of the country, on a commercial expedition, since which time he had not been heard of. The Doctor added that Ruddock had been long ago apprized of the nature of his late uncle's will, for that he had procured a copy to be taken in London, and had forwarded it to him. The agent employed for this purpose happened to be a tall thin man in a low-crowned hat, an accidental coincidence, which, as it will be recollected, had almost scared Lomax out of his wits, on his visit to Doctors' Commons.

Delighted to find that Ruddock was still living and restored to health, Mary not only caused advertisements to be inserted in a variety of newspapers, offering a handsome rethan by the delightful

agent to Buenos Ayres, en to find him out, and prov to assist him in his resea a letter which revealed although in guarded ten mediate return of Ruddo Having satisfied her co tion of every measure th to attain the great desig was fixed, Mary was at l her many griefs, and to an object not less assis beauties of the neighbor had ever been a passions

moderate but equable cheerfulness, a frame of mind more conducive to happiness than the exuberant spirits in which she had heretofore indulged, and which were not seldom followed by a proportionate exhaustion. While Mary's griefs were fresh and poignant, she condoled with her, read appropriate books to her, and accompanied her in little excursions to the most picturesque spots in the vicinity, until she had gradually weaned her from the contemplation of her s rrows: and, when her tone of mind became sufficiently invigorated to sympathize with livelier sallies, Helen gave a loose to her constitutional sprightliness, and put forth all those powers of amusement with which she was so eminently gifted.

Though they had been subjected to sore trials and heart-withering disappointments, both parties possessed the inappreciable blessing of an unaccusing conscience; both could look back on their past conduct not only with com-



Heaven, had they abando unavailing regret or desp

Time rolled on without of Ruddock; and, at the marked by any other occu cementation of their mut more intimate knowledge of one another's virtues resumed their character which was marked in Maness, and in her friend by ness, easily exalted into

## CHAPTER XI.

"She, like a moon in wane,
Faded before him, coward, nor could restrain
Her fearful sobs, self-folding, like a flower,
That faints into itself at evening hour."

KEATS.

As a proof of her complete conquest over her ill-fated passion, and of the calm self-possession to which Mary was by this time restored, we may state that, when she read in a newspaper the announcement of Evelyn Barlow's marriage with a girl of whose amiability and accomplishments she remembered to have heard honourable mention, the intelligence only occasioned a slight throbbing of her heart, and she was enabled to retire to her own chamber



learn that he was enjoy another, an unalloyed untoward fate might I into a life of the mos had he prosecuted his a

A few days after the tials had been made k disagreeably surprised the itinerant preacher operated with so sinist of her unfortunate mot practices having been of the religious commattached himself, he from their pale, a fact

ment to a chapel in London. Having lately learnt the death of her father, Grimsby had ferreted out the address of the rich heiress, and had travelled to Ilfracombe with the intention of obtaining her favour, and offering himself as a substitute for the discarded Barlow.

Hopeless, and even preposterous as such a project may appear, it did not present itself to Grimsby as being surrounded with any insurmountable difficulties, for it fell within his cognizance that obscure and unattractive preachers of his own persuasion had achieved matches not less advantageous than that which he was contemplating.

Rendered reckless by his desperate circumstances, since he was now doomed to begin the world afresh, without either means or character, he thought the enterprise was, at all events, well worth a trial. If it succeeded, he was made for life, elevated beyond the most aspiring



Quickened by these a sharp spur of necessity daily visitant to Mary, a best attire, brightening with a leering smile, assecant tenderness of ton conversational powers, i means deficient, to such most likely to ingratiate heiress.

Helen, instantly per visited it with unmeasu little pains to conceal she considered his intrus

the feelings of a man who had been the friend and guest of her parents, and had hitherto given her no real ground of offence, for she did not believe that he entertained any serious thoughts of offering her his hand.

Grimsby, naturally sanguine and arrogant, construed her forbearance into encouragement, and in a few days declared himself her lover, reminding her of her unprotected situation, and urging the prudence of her contracting a respectable marriage, as a defence against the sharpers and adventurers with whom she was sure to be besieged.

Provoked out of her usual placidity, Mary gave such a peremptory and indignant rejection to his suit, that his wrath was kindled, and he had the audacity to recommend a reconsideration of her verdict, since his mind was made up to have her, and he was not to be disappointed, and still less offended with impunity. In answer to this insolence she rang the

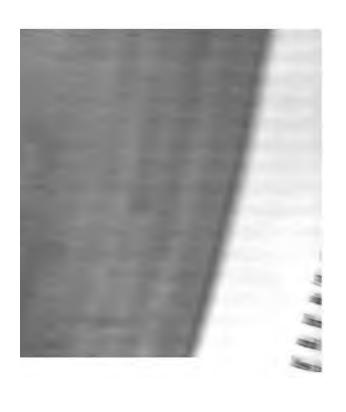


tures were inflamed with Grimsby had, in on truth: he was not a mast any time, and least or ment, when his tempe circumstances desperate on to mar his fortunes to

or to mar his fortunes is carry off the heiress is that, if he could convewould consent to marry could make it appear the ling fugitive) rather the with a blemished reputs

For the execution of the sea offered him tem an evening ride to some of the Tors or hills in the neighbourhood. Helen, however, being confined to the house by a slight indisposition, Mary had been fain for the last few days to make her favourite excursion with no other companion than an old groom, a remarkably trustworthy person, as she believed, and a more than sufficient protection in that quiet and secluded part of the country. Accident possessed Grimsby with the fact that this man had formerly been imprisoned for a misdemeanour, and was by no means a reclaimed character, though he affected a particular starchness and steadiness in his present occupation.

The display of twenty guineas, of which at this juncture there were very few in circulation, and the promise of the horses belonging to his mistress, soon won him over to be his accomplice in the meditated outrage, which was represented to him as of trivial importance, since it was to terminate in marriage. Having thus



the mound, and bore her off in his powerful arms to a boat that was in waiting; while his accomplice rode across the country, intending to embark for Ireland with the horses, which were to be the further reward of his villany.

So rapidly had all this been accomplished, that Mary, paralysed and aghast, had neither offered resistance, nor even attempted to call for aid; but as her bewildered faculties returned, she shrieked aloud, when the ruffian stopped her cries with a handkerchief, and bade her be silent as she valued her life. The sound of his hated voice, and a glimpse of his features, hardened into an expression of fixed desperation, revealed to his victim the nature and the extent of her danger; but her energies abandoned her when she had most need of their exertion, and, after a short struggle, she uttered a deep sigh, closed her eyes, and sunk back upon his shoulder, overcome with faintness.



trouble. Look!" he the speeding groom, 'files from the just ver husband. Now, boatm me one of the oars, as the skiff. She ought to lin."

With these words he shore, but had scarcel when, upon looking al "Avast, comrade, avast oars, until yonder boat track has cleared us;" threw part of a tarpaulin to conceal her body.

opened her eyes, and obtained a glance of the approaching boat, in which she was delighted to perceive a lady and children. Fortunately, she had sufficient presence of mind to remain silent and motionless until it drew near, when, rallying all her energies, she suddenly started up, and extending both her arms, screamed as loudly as she could:—"Help!—help! for God's sake, help me!" and continued her outcries, even after the savage Grimsby had ferociously thrust her down in the boat, and again thrown the tarpaulin over her.

"Villain!" cried a man's voice from the opposite boat, which was instantly steered down upon them, "what is the meaning of this cowardly, this unmanly cruelty to a woman?"

"Keep aloof! or you are a dead man!" roared Grimsby in a tone of fury. "This guilty creature is my wife, and, if you attempt to interfere between us, I swear by Heaven that



is bearing me off from save me, as you are men

The boats were now Grimsby, seeing that previously spoken was a arrest his progress, and a such a furious but ineffe a heavy boat-hook, tha self in the effort, fell for head with a stunning opposite gunwale, tuml instantly sunk never to

At the very instant
Mary again started up
convulsive spring into t

upon her escape, she burst for a moment into an hysterical laugh, and then, sinking down, relapsed into insensibility.

"Lie to," said the stranger to his men:—
"keep a sharp look-out, and let us see whether
we cannot pick up this good-for-nothing rapscallion. I would not have him perish, though
he would certainly have knocked my brains
out had I not avoided the blow. Pull ahead,
sirrah! and search for your comrade."

The latter words were addressed to Grimsby's boatman, who, not liking the complexion of the affair, left his employer to his fate, and made the best of his way to rejoin the skiff; while the stranger, after lying to for some time, concluded, as was, indeed, the case, that the perpetrator of the outrage, disabled by the concussion he had received in falling, had been prevented from making the least exertion to save himself, and had perished. The rowers were, accordingly, ordered to proceed to the



liverers, whom she fountion to be husband and quitted her to attend to mising to return in an holhealth.

Through the good office a restorative which she we swallow, Mary was suffithe expiration of the time her rescuers, to whom so to express her heartfelt grain the agitation and bewi ment, she had omitted to particularly to came alone, apologizing if wife, whose attentions we

most fervent acknowledgments, and invoking blessings on his head; "I am glad to see that you have found your tongue, and look so cheerily, and I trust that after a night's sleep you will be as well as ever; but, as to thanks, you owe me none, none whatever, for I should have been a brute rather than a man had I not done as much for any woman in danger and distress. It was a lucky circumstance, to be sure, that we happened to come athwart you just at that moment. We are but now arrived in England from a long voyage, and our ship was bound to Bristol; but, as my wife is a native of Ilfracombe, and has friends in the place, she wished to be put ashore, and to remain here with the children, during my absence in London, where I have some important business to settle. If your thanks, therefore, are due to any one, which I do not admit, you must not give them to me, but to Mrs. Ruddock."



"Edward Ruddock, monly called Ned Ruddo "And had you an unc Bristol?"

"Ay, old Diedrich H
such, but he was little
hearted uncle of the bah
cut me out of his will
girl without his consent
ship myself off to South
world in the best way I
"Gracious Heaven
"what an unexpected,

"what an unexpected, counter! And do you account of ——. have

answer," said Ruddock, smiling, "since you have never told me your name."

- "My name is Mary Lomax."
- "Why, then, this is a lucky hit, indeed! something like those marvellous meetings one reads of in a romance. Yes, I did receive your letter, but it directed me to an attorney in London, for which place it was my intention to have set off to-morrow morning."
- "O, Mr. Ruddock!" exclaimed Mary, whose confusion and embarrassment became evident as she spoke; "I have disclosures of the most momentous nature to make to you, but—but—." She hesitated, for she recollected that Helen was present, and the conflict of her emotions deprived her for the moment of the power of speech.
- "I see how it is," said Ruddock. "You have a long story to tell me, but are too much flurried and surprised to set about it just now, and I don't wonder at it, for methinks you



the morning, and by tha you in better trim for tal wished the friends good departure.

"I perceive, by you Mary to Helen, "how amazed you, and I regreyour curiosity. My into Mr. Ruddock must be a reference to the secret pledged not to penetrate

"That pledge I sh smallest attempt to for the truth, I feel little inte tion you have made, no frank, plain-spoken person, whose honesty and amiability, if I may judge by his looks and manner, may well compensate for the absence of a more polished urbanity. Be he who or what he may, his apparition appears to have quite banished the composure you were beginning to resume, and so, to cut off all further parley, I shall leave you for the present, and send Horton to assist you to bed."

On the following morning, Mary awaited the coming of Ruddock with a comparative self-possession, which, however, she found it extremely difficult to preserve when she commenced her painful and humiliating task.

She accomplished it, nevertheless; hurrying over the narrative of her parents' crime, which, with a truly filial piety, she endeavoured to extenuate, by attributing it to a temporary alienation of mind, and concluding her recital by stating that she had practised a strict economy since her father's death, and was now



shifting that was left Raddick semotions du the vehemence of his a nourable conduct, we s scribe.

"Well," he exclaim that a bad action entains and the account you parents abundantly county you little thought, wrote such a pressing England, that you we for your consciention. Thus, however, by a circumstances, has it

this moment have been tossing on the Scottish shore, at the mercy of the villain, Grimsby."

- "It bears, indeed," said Mary, "the aspect of a providential intervention, for which I shall never cease to feel grateful."
- "My means at present are but scanty," pursued Ruddock; "I have a growing family, and every man is entitled to his own, so I shall not hesitate to take what you seem so eager to surrender; but it must not be the whole; we will make a compromise of some sort. At all events, you must retain a comfortable independence for yourself."
- "Not a guinea, not a shilling; to clear my conscience, I must completely clear my coffers. Upon this point my determination is inflexible."
- "May I ask whether you have any other means of subsistence?"
- " None, whatever; but that is quite immaterial: my friend, Helen, has enough for both of

us, and she has extorted from me a promise to reside with her permanently, and to share her fortune."

"You are a couple of brave, noble girls, and worthy of each other," cried Ruddock; "and if you will allow myself and my wife, who is one of the best and most cheerful little creatures in the world, to become your neighbours, and to claim your friendship—but we will talk of that another time. I can't stop now—excuse my running away so abruptly—I must not lose a moment in telling Mrs. Ruddock of our surprising good fortune. Dear Fanny! how delighted she will be! And so am I, but it is more on her account, and that of the children, than my own."

"You must solemnly promise me never to divulge, except to your wife, what has now passed between us. It is the only favour I shall ever ask of you. If possible, I would

screen the memory of my parents from shame and ignominy, while I, myself, am most anxious to avoid the disgrace of being pointed at as the daughter of a felon."

"On the honour of a man, I pledge myself to what you enjoin," said Ruddock, who then hurried off to convey to his wife the joyful tidings of their unexpected enrichment.



## CHAPTER

Ah' what a life were this'
 Gives not the hawthorn-bash
 Than loth a rich embroidered

DELIGETING more and in Mary, and feeling for he streetment as she grew be ter unability and her marker much persuasion, he promise that she would respectation companion.

Mary a mank avowal the

whose delicate and affectionate importunity it was impossible to resist.

During the past two years, each had experienced such a soothing alleviation of her sorrows, each had become so thoroughly endeared to each other, and to her present mode of life, that neither could bear the thought of a change of any sort, and still less of a separation. To secure their friendship and happiness, so far at least as the caprices of fate are susceptible of control, Helen determined never to marry, a resolution not hastily adopted only to be as lightly broken, but one to which she had been impelled by many grave considerations, and adhered to in after life with a firm consistency.

Disappointed in her first love, her heart might be said to have already tasted the sorrows of widowhood, an ordeal of which she dreaded to incur a second risk: nothing could reconcile her to the chances of being severed

N



tain, for a contingent All these motives we equal potency on the she not felt herself a bacy by that parame propriety which had her engagement with "If there be as of sympathy," cric cheerful moods, "v dear Mary, to live as both love-lorn dams mined, not however disparagement of the place ourselves defi

rated class, than witlings and satirists are willing to allow. Here have I just been reading the tirade of a malicious scribbler, who details the progress of an old maid's embitterment at and after the following numerical fashion.

- "lst. She professes to dislike balls, finding it difficult to get a partner.
- "2nd. Wonders that men can leave sensible women to flirt with chits.
- "3d. Becomes jealous of the praises of other females, and enlarges upon the misery of such of her acquaintance as are unhappily married.
- "4th. Makes love to a young man without fortune, is unsuccessful, and rails openly against the whole sex.
- "5th. Takes to cards and scandal, bestows her unclaimed sensibilities upon a tom-cat and a pug-dog, and exhibits a strong predilection for a methodist parson.

nifested in the purity and benevolence of their lives-the redeeming portion, in short, of our common nature. Gladly and triumphantly, with these convictions upon his mind, does he adduce the instance of Helen and Mary, in additional refutation, if any such were wanting, of the trite and flippant impertinences in which male cynics and sour misogynists have sometimes thought proper to indulge. It has been said that women are incapable of a stedfast and consistent friendship. That of Helen and Mary never suffered a moment's interruption; time, which generally weakens, if it does not sever, the attachments between men, only binding them together in a closer and more delightful intimacy. That a woman cannot keep a secret is another of the received canons of the sex-traducers. Helen did more; she abstained from prying into one, although the mystery that attended her friend's rejection of Barlow, and occasioned her subsequent impoverish-

would have been deemed much too eligible to be refused, could any considerations of a merely selfish or interested character have tempted them to break the resolution they had formed under the deliberate conviction of their judgment. From this they never swerved, not even in thought; and when years had rolled away, years of an uninterrupted friendship and happiness, such as seldom falls to the lot of mortals - when the foot of Time, however lightly he might have trodden, had stamped its impress upon their form and features, although the mind of each still retained its vernal freshness-when their bloom and beauty had faded, and they had so long been enrolled upon the list of old maids, that they were beginning to be called the old ladies, both of them were enabled to look back upon their life of "single blessedness," not only without regret, but with the most fervent gratitude to Heaven for the lot that had been vouchsafed to them. Their



to depend upon the parish rates for its support. Between these two extremes there is a yearly increasing population of females, of whom the far greater portion must inevitably be destined to a life of celibacy; a defect in our social system, which would be more deplorable, did it not ultimately tend to cure itself. Upon the existing generation must fall the task of enduring this acknowledged evil; and it is therefore especially incumbent upon them, for their own sakes, to disabuse themselves and the world at large of the silly and most illiberal prejudice against old maids, an injurious and ungenerous feeling, which, having been always utterly groundless, has now become not less impolitic than hateful.

Impartial observers will generally find in this calumniated class a more kindly and generous heart, as well as more enlarged views, than are commonly encountered among the wives. And it seems natural that this should be the



selves, they become mis their minds acquiring a expansion from the ver support, like the ivy, wh blossoms when it is prev any other body.

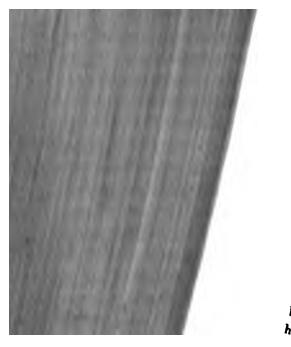
Married folks in Eng sidering themselves

> " Born for the universe, And to party give up wha

Their party is the family terie. Within the little c their acquaintance, there much domestic virtue; that a rigid scrutinizer

they are too apt to forget that society at large is only another word for relationship, and that "one touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

Old maids, on the contrary, whose affections and thoughts have never been so strictly confined within the domestic pound, are more expansive in their sensibilities -- more cosmopolitan and liberal in their views-more calm and disinterested in forming their opinions. Happy the family in which a maiden aunt or sister is regularly domiciliated! Free from the passions, and superior to the jealousies, which sometimes disturb the harmony of the best conducted household, she becomes the umpire of their little differences, the mediator between opposing parties, the restorer, by her own benign example, of all the charitable and kindly feelings; while her clear, impartial judgment enables her to discover and to recommend whatever may best conduce to the general



in parties of the perior have be

in one of the most romantic situations of that picturesque district. That his house was the home of Helen and her friend, whenever they chose to render it such, it is scarcely necessary to state; nor need we add that his ardent gratitude, his cheerfulness, and his intelligence, rendered him at all times a most acceptable companion to his visitants.

Other and more powerful attractions drew them frequently to his residence, for they did not number, in the wide circle of their acquaintance, a more friendly or fascinating person than Mrs. Ruddock. Originally an actress in a small provincial theatre, she added one more honourable example to the exceptionless list of those female performers, who having, in our own times, been raised by marriage into a higher sphere, have engrafted, upon the graces and endowments requisite for success in their first most arduous profession, all the proprieties and virtues that can adorn



one of the most exemplary, as well as the happiest, of husbands.

Nor did marriage and independence operate with a less beneficial effect upon Rose, whose morbid nervousness and timidity gradually subsided into the calm self-possession which was alone wanting to give full development to her genius and a consistent fascination to her manners. Besides assisting her husband in his literary undertakings, which he pursued with unabated ardour and success, she became a regular poetical contributor to several of the periodical publications, acquiring a merited reputation as a writer, while she felt an honest pride, in thus adding to their finances.

Although their cottage-door was opened by a "neat-handed Phillis," instead of a liveried footman, the most enlightened of the titled and the great, residing in the neighbourhood, a class which, in England, seldom fails to honour itself by honouring talents and virtue,

solution of securing the bulk of his fortune by settling it on his wife.

For this purpose trustees were to be named, but where to find them he knew not, for he had no friends, and not even an acquaintance from whom he was entitled to ask a favour of any kind. All through life it had been his great object to avoid the performance of the smallest social duty. Responsibilities, liabilities, or trouble on account of others, he had ever held in special abhorrence. He had never been trustee, or executor, or assignee; nay, he had repeatedly refused to witness a simple signature, lest it should expose him, at some future period, to some possible inconvenience. These selfish and cowardly evasions he called knowing the world; and he now found, by their declining to accede to his requests, that the world knew him.

From motives of shabby economy, he employed a pettifogging attorney, who recom-

tor;" and that we cannot more surely serve ourselves than when, by serving others, we confirm the poet's assertion that "true selflove and social are the same."

THE END.

LONDON:

F. SHUBERL, JUN., LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.





